



Student-run media: building communication & engagement

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Why does Connect exist?

Connect has been published bi-monthly since 1979!

It aims to:

- document student participation approaches and initiatives;
- support reflective practices;
- develop and share resources.

Connect:

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This Issue:

I had thought to hold off sending out this issue of *Connect* until the start of Term 2, so that its arrival wouldn't get lost in holiday e-mails. However, I then realised that, as Victorian schools resume for Term 2, schools in NSW are just breaking for holidays - and elsewhere in Australia, it's still the middle of the term break. Weird. (So this issue gets published now regardless!)



The mass media have pointed both to the disjointed nature of school term times across Australia, and to the consequences: here in Victoria, for example, Term 1 has been very brief and Term 2 will be a long one leading into winter.

But what no-one mentions is that one group of people most affected by these (apparently) three-year decisions - students - has not been included in discussions about the annual timetables. A topic to be taken up for consultation and, dare we say it, joint decision-making?

Media

The articles in this issue about student-led media and communication remind us of the power of such approaches, as well as their impact on engagement through purposeful learning. The possibilities have blossomed enormously since I was involved with the *Ascolta* 5-language community newspaper, published by students from primary and secondary schools in Brunswick in the 1970s and 1980s (see this article from *The Age*).

One of the most powerful lessons for me was seeing students, who had taken part in previous layout and production days, teaching parents and teachers how to put a newspaper together. The same principles apply to students producing radio (youth stations are often looking for presenters), video (similarly for community TV stations) and on-line media. Students have skills - and often simply need opportunities to link their school studies to real-world, purposeful publication of their ideas, research, views etc. Such approaches also build strong links between schools and their communities, and establish students as 'leaders of today'.



Next Issue ...

As we move to the middle of the year, we look forward to hearing from you about more ways in which students are building engagement and purpose through active participation in their studies ... from classroom to national levels. In Victoria, students have been meeting across the state to define the issues that are important to them ... and that they will take to the VicSRC annual Congress in July. In New South Wales, students have begun talking with Department officers about reinvigorating their input at a state level. What is happening elsewhere? In a national election year, how are student voices being heard about the importance of education - and the importance of an active role for students as education planners and decision-makers.

Roger Holdsworth

Next Issue: #219: June 2016

Deadline for material: end of May, 2016

Finding Voice and Engagement Through *Siena TV*

A **Student Action Team** can be a vehicle to empower students so that they have an active role in their community – investigating issues and making a difference within their school setting.

Students at my College initiated their own television program called '**Siena TV**' and took action within the school to support the long-term goal of increased student engagement and connectedness to the College's **Pastoral Care** program. Throughout the process the students planned, organised, collected and analysed different types of data and delivered three television episodes to the wider school community.

We discovered that, if a teacher works alongside students in a facilitating and enabling role and creates a forum where teachers are prepared to see young people differently, then positive outcomes develop. Students find confidence within themselves through a sense of achievement and the belief they can make a difference, while learning the essential skills of planning, cooperation, negotiation and reflection. If young people's viewpoints are taken seriously it encourages students to have a voice and this can lead to more classroom discussion and interest and excitement in a wellbeing program. If young people have a sense of purpose, control and belonging that is driven by genuine dialogue and substantial decision-making, then they will feel empowered and their sense of wellbeing is increased.

Introduction

I began by seeking ways to build student voice, participation and engagement in the Pastoral Care program at my school. I thought this could be achieved through the creation of the student-led television program '**Siena TV**' and through student representation on the Pastoral program committee.

The long-term objective would be the adoption of new pedagogical practice through the Pastoral Care program, initiated and directed by the students. Students, as well as teachers, will have an authentic role in wellbeing matters and will take joint responsibility for the delivery of the Pastoral program.

Despite the school having a strong **Student Representative Council (SRC)** that primarily focuses on social justice initiatives, fundraising ventures and environmental sustainability, there has never been any student representation on the **Pastoral Care Program Committee** or in the delivery of the wellbeing program.

Practically, I thought that short-term outcomes would be four or five students having active roles on the Pastoral Care Committee, and for a student-led television program to be viewed in every House Group once

a term throughout the school year commencing in 2016. The program would move away from traditional school issues, such as locker maintenance and uniform rules, and focus on topics that students endorse as being of particular concern to them.

This initiative will hopefully encourage meaningful student participation where students feel "valued and empowered" (Holdsworth, 2014: 72). Finally, the creation of four senior leadership positions from Years 10 -12 within the school will assist in helping to formalise and institutionalise the process.

I am a House Coordinator who looks after the individual wellbeing and teaching and learning concerns of 200 students. I am also the Head of the Pastoral Care program, delivering a Pastoral program each Thursday morning to all students, in addition to overseeing a **Pastoral Care Committee**. This Committee consists of 12 teachers, including the Vice Principal for Student Wellbeing, the college counsellors, two House Coordinators and various House Group teachers. Four Year



11 and 12 students, who have created and edited the *Siena TV* program have also been invited to join the Pastoral Care Committee in an official capacity, participating in dialogue to “exert some agency” (Holdsworth, 2014: 68) over the priorities and the delivery of the program itself.

The *Siena TV* experience has been an invaluable stimulus for thinking about school improvement via the Wellbeing and Pastoral Care teams, and the kinds of skills, knowledge and behaviours the College is trying to foster in students. The project itself has generated the following enquiry questions:

- How engaged are the students with the *Siena TV* and wider Pastoral Care program at the College?
- What are the gaps between where we are now and where we want to be?
- What else could be implemented at the College to assist this project and the Pastoral Care program at the school?
- What have I learnt about this experience?
- Can I transfer this knowledge into other projects or programs at the school?

This experience and research on student voice and engagement has prompted me to explore the extent to which the school can cultivate collaborative relationships among students, and between students and teachers that are conducive to capacity building, agency and overall school improvement.

Project Rationale

The school in which I work is a Catholic girls' secondary college situated in Camberwell with an enrolment of 741 students from Years 7 to 12. It is a school in the Dominican tradition of nearly 75 years. The girls are taught to value learning, to think critically, and to respect the diversity of cultures based on the core Dominican values of the school. In the external College review of 2015 the school was viewed as a “very effective school that exhibits characteristics of school excellence in the 21st century” (p 3). However, the recent School Improvement Framework (SIF) data confirms that the area of improvement lies in student engagement and student voice. This promoted me to explore the theories and practices

underpinning student voice research in relation to increasing students' active participation in decision-making within my school setting.

In my area of responsibility, the Pastoral program is coordinated through a vertical House system in which students work in House Groups, Year Levels and Houses on a variety of wellbeing programs every week. I was appointed Pastoral Care leader two years ago. The program has not been without its detractors in the past. In one focus group, one staff member described the program as “*not formally documented and having no real sense of structure or purpose*”. Another teacher claimed that “*goals and aims were not discussed and the general consensus was that the time needed to be filled rather than used effectively*”.

This early review made me question the extent to which House Group teachers were listening and learning from student voices and to what extent these teachers engaged with students on wellbeing matters. As another staff member stated: “*most staff agree the culture and the quality of the Pastoral period did not start to make positive steps forward until a Pastoral Care Coordinator was formally appointed*”.

As a result, the feedback and external review reinforced the importance of showing staff through the *Siena TV* project and the participation of students on the Pastoral Care committee that a positive impact can be created through greater student voice. This could create a stronger commitment to learning, and improve motivation towards the Pastoral Care program, attendance in House Groups, and student perceptions of their teachers.

Historically in most schools, students would have minimal consultation over matters such as the canteen, the toilets or how to reduce littering (Rudduck and Fielding, 2006: 6). Roger Hart called this the lowest rung in his ladder of participation as “symbolic or token participation” (Hart, 1992: 7). This can lead to an environment in which students are disengaged and uninspired.

At my school students have been given some autonomy around issues such as fundraising and socials where students can exert some agency and experience some success. This is

evidenced in my school setting by 10% of the student population engaging in the Student Representative Council (SRC). However, this can be seen as “existing on the margins of schools' priorities” (Holdsworth, 2014: 68).

There are procedures and a readiness in the school to share decision-making power with students. However, due to a lack of confidence, previous experience of not being listened to, or not the right teaching staff, the fact that there is a student voice does not necessarily equate to genuine student engagement levels (Shier, 2001: 110). This was particularly evident in the Pastoral program in which all initiatives were teacher-led with very little student engagement or voice.

UK researcher Michael Fielding has proposed a ‘hierarchy of student voice’ that moves students to initiate their own projects and taking action within the school and wider world (Fielding, 2001: 136). My hope was that this world would be viewed through the lens of *Siena TV*. A new paradigm suggests, as a result, that students will be able to influence the education agenda on issues that relate to curriculum and student wellbeing. The hope is that this will build an authentic learning environment that promotes engagement, builds resilience and another opportunity for students to find success. Fielding supports this notion of participatory research as students can become “radical agents of change” (2001: 123) as the teacher works alongside them in facilitating and enabling roles. This would be the case with the Pastoral committee and program, as I would proactively work with the students involved.

My rationale was therefore to create another avenue for student voice through the Pastoral Care program. As one student commented in a focus group: “*I definitely look forward to Pastoral more if I know there is an episode of Siena TV on. It makes me feel happy and makes me feel like I belong. That doesn't happen in all of the Pastoral periods but I am hoping now that maybe it will a bit more*”.

Action

The project commenced when four students approached me with the idea of running a news program for an **Information Technology** class assignment at the beginning of the school year. Throughout the next six months, these

four students and myself managed cycles of planning, evaluating, gathering new insights, and re-planning. They gave the Pastoral period a new student focus and voice through three *Siena TV* episodes. The students have primarily driven the change initiative of *Siena TV* – student generated film that covers school events and the extracurricular activities of students.

The first part of the planning process was to negotiate meeting times with the students (once a month on a Thursday morning), establish a time line for the action research cycle and the creation of the *Siena TV* episodes, and articulate common agreements and understanding that were drafted in a formal document and submitted to the College Principal for discussion. A meeting with the Principal was held and approval was immediately given due to the proposal's employment of pedagogical practices that could lead to improved student outcomes and engagement. *Siena TV* needed to show that it would be closely associated with the positive school ethos, and could have a sustained improvement in student wellbeing. This approval from the College

Principal led to the creation of the first *Siena TV* episode.

Episode 1

Once approval was obtained, the next few weeks were given over to planning the first episode with the students. The students were excited to move from a classroom assignment to a whole-school wellbeing project that enabled them to initiate the project and take action within the school. We thought we would stay small and stay focused, be realistic about what we could do and set a timescale. The meetings were collegial, informal, collaborative and open and aimed to provide students with "genuine dialogue" (Rudduck and Fielding, 2006: 227). I wanted the *Siena TV* episodes to be driven by the students on issues that they identified, news items that they themselves had framed and articulated in the hope that the students would be seen as important and credible.

A successful project often involves a "readiness to be surprised by students' insights and capabilities and not dismissive of their thinking" (Holdsworth, 2002: 2). The meetings created a sense

of authenticity as I learnt to listen to their suggestions, offer feedback, discuss lines of action, and explain, occasionally, why certain actions were not possible throughout the team meetings. I was simply working as a co-researcher while the students investigated the issue, made plans and proposals, and took action on it. It was an important part of the planning process as my aim was to create authentic student voice and this could not be achieved unless all students were empowered and felt free to participate.

The first episode aired in Week 8 of Term 1 to the entire College community at school assembly and focused on the annual fun run, the International Women's Day breakfast and an upcoming drama festival. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive from the leadership team, the staff and the students, resulting in a standing ovation at the end of the episode by the student body. This was clear evidence for the four volunteers that they could make important decisions, do important things and take action (Engellener, 2009: 15). The enjoyment received from the creation of the first episode was the catalyst for more planning and creativity for this project team.



Episode 2

The second episode to be aired in late Term 2 focused on the new building project, the emergence of a run club and the upcoming College musical. This required conversations with the College Principal, the builders (in relation to risk management), Heads of the Sport, PE and Music faculties, and time at musical rehearsals on the weekend. The students worked as a **Student Action Team** where there was substantial decision-making in relation to time lines, areas of responsibility and lines of communication.

During this time, the Student Action Team also started attending the Pastoral Care Committee with 12 other staff members. Were the teachers prepared to "see young people differently"? (Rudduck and Fielding, 2006, p. 225) The usually enthusiastic students were very quiet in the first two meetings but soon established their own sense of agency as they had an opportunity to articulate their opinions, have their views heard, and increase their power as decision-makers who could make a difference. This created a sense and level of trust, safety and respect for the students. Trusting and positive relationships are integral to change (McGee, 2010: 136).

One of the *Siena TV* student members commented: *"It would be ace if some staff realised that we have some really good ideas for other parts of the Pastoral program. Because we do. Lots of us do. And we would like to be given a chance to explain them and act on them. I think we will get that chance now and that's exciting"*.

This collaborative approach between the teachers and the students regarding the *Siena TV* project provided further "enthusiasm about going further" (Fullan, 2004, p. 8) and moved the project from an initiation and implementation phase to established structures and patterns of behaviour that could be institutionalised over time (Marsh, 2000: 383).

Data Collection

After the second episode was viewed at another full school assembly, the team thought it was the right time to collect different types of data to reflect on the journey so far and to examine the program's effectiveness. The students decided to create some qualitative and quantitative data sources through questionnaires with both closed and open questions for students to complete in a designated Pastoral period at the beginning of Term 3.

This was accompanied by focus groups with eight House Group teachers and ten students from Years 11 and 12.

The purpose of the open-ended questionnaires for Year 7 to 11 students was to yield responses that would give a strong indication of attitudes to the *Siena TV* program. We received 251 responses from the study body: 43% of the student cohort for the designated Year levels. They were asked questions such as:

- What did you find most memorable about *Siena TV*?
- What news item did you find the most engaging?
- What is the most convenient way for you to access *Siena TV*?
- Do you have any ideas for *Siena TV* that could be incorporated into the 2016 format?

The closed-ended questionnaires, using a Likert Scale, also aimed to assess the opinions and attitudes of participants. The intention was to use the reported answers to foster discussion and "get participants to think" (Colucci, 2007: 1425) about which items should be discussed in more detail in upcoming episodes. Some of the questions included:

- I was engaged in the *Siena TV* episodes
- *Siena TV* episodes were informative about current school events
- I would prefer to receive information about the College through *Siena TV* rather than through a teacher, newsletter or bulletin
- *Siena TV* represented my year level
- If there was an opportunity to help produce *Siena TV* in 2016, I would be interested in participating

Students were assured of their anonymity by their House Group teachers when completing the questionnaires.

Lastly, the focus group discussion was a way of engaging staff and students that made participants "answer questions in a more active way" (Colucci, 2007: 1424) and yielded qualitative data. This took the form of semi-structured open interviews. This opens up communication channels between teachers and their students, encourages students to have a voice and shows students that they can have an influence (Wilson, 1999: 23). An advantage of

this process was that participants were able to "feed off others' comments" (Mertler, 2012: 126) as the students were especially comfortable talking in a small group. This generated some good information that could further drive this change of more student participation in the Pastoral program. It also allowed the four student committee members to affirm their personal perspectives on the program but also learn the essential skills of cooperation and negotiation with teachers and fellow students.

Episode 3

The feedback led the student-led team to change the focus of episode three that was delivered at the end of Term 3. As one student stated: *"when something funny happens in the episode we all laugh together and sometimes I make eye contact and laugh with girls I don't usually talk to. I also like how after the episode finishes, we all talk about what we have just seen and congratulate people who have been in the episode and stuff"*. As a result, the action we took was to show the TV program through the allocated Pastoral time via House Groups as opposed to a full-school assembly. We also decided to incorporate a variety of students from various year levels and not just the four student volunteers.

The Pastoral Committee decided to film some community service and social justice initiatives that had been coordinated in House Groups. This allowed for a "critical mass of people" (Marcus, 2014: 526), with students and House Group teachers working together to drive the *Siena TV* initiative. For example, two Year 7 students discussed working with St Dominic's church making sandwiches for those parish members who are less fortunate and a Year 9 student interviewed her peers in their House Group while they were finishing dot paintings for an Indigenous social justice initiative. Two ex-students also interviewed each other about the best way to excel in Year 12. A student action team such as *Siena TV* can offer increased experiences of community and belonging, and this process builds social capital (Holdsworth et al, 2003: 13).

House Group teachers were able to view the new approaches and behaviours through the episode and were able to discuss the program with students in order to enhance the pastoral relationships between the two groups of stakeholders. The feedback from various

members of the College via focus groups was once again overwhelmingly positive.

After the viewing of episode three, the College Principal and the Director of College Programs made the suggestion to have four **Siena TV** leadership positions made available for upcoming Year 10 and 11 students. These students would lead this initiative for the 2016 school year. These **Public Relations and Information Technology** captains will be members of the Pastoral Committee, set out the time line for **Siena TV** for the coming year, and make and edit the final episode each term. Once these four students are voted in during Term 4, the action research cycle will begin again, as we will plan, reflect, act and observe on how to improve the quality of the **Siena TV** program and raise student voice and engagement in the process.

Findings and Discussion

In one of the focus groups conducted an anticipated response arose when one of the student participants commented: *"I feel far more connected to the students than previously. This has been proven by students from all year levels coming up to me congratulating me on the episode or wanting to ask questions about it"*. Another student participant stated: *"Coming directly*

from students meant that it was relevant for students and was delivered in a way that the viewers would understand and find enjoyment in". Another participant reinforced this notion by stating: *"It gave me and the other girls more of a profile around the school, more recognition definitely. In our meetings, we also got plenty of opportunity to state our opinion which was great"*.

However, one other student suggested an unanticipated response: *"I had a lot of teachers come up to me in the corridors saying congratulations on various episodes. I've always had good teacher-student relationships but they have seemed more approachable since Siena TV has started"*.

These responses from the student leaders of the project suggested that the students had moved from the lowest rung in Hart's ladder of participation from symbolic or token participation, to a project that empowered these students, enabling them to access and learn from the expertise of teachers (1992: 7). It also suggested that there had been a strengthening in teacher-student relationships and created a "pedagogy of voice" (Ranson, 2000: 268). This builds student capacity to whole school improvement as students

can make important decisions, can do important things, and action can be undertaken as part of a students' learning in school (Engellener, 2009: 15).

While the four students who filmed and edited the program felt more empowered and developed a greater sense of agency, the ultimate goal of raising collective student voice has not been fully achieved. This was highlighted by a House Group teacher who observed: *"There is a danger that the perception of Siena TV represents the whole school but in essence belongs to the four presenters. I reckon referring to Siena TV meetings as staff meetings or something equivalent would also let more kids feel like that they were really part of something solid, professional and meaningful"*.

My hope is to move away from a system where relatively few students get to be representatives. **Siena TV** is in danger of becoming exclusive and becomes elitist and relatively ineffective as a small group. As a result, in the final episode, three students from Years 7 to 9 presented sections on community service and social justice in Middle School. A variety of teachers and students believed this enhanced the program and offered the potential for those girls to experience a level of belonging and responsibility.



This was confirmed by another House Group teacher who stated: *"I'd also encourage a push to involve younger students in the program – I know that Jo relished being involved in the Bunjil's nest story from Episode 3".* If more students from a variety of Year levels are encouraged to participate, there will be greater opportunity for students to articulate their opinions, construct new roles as change makers in the College and increase their power as "decision-makers who can make a difference" (Department of Education, 2007: 20).

My second goal was to use *Siena TV* as a vehicle to increase student engagement with the overall Pastoral Care program in the long term. This has been achieved to some extent as one House Group teacher commented: *"The student and teacher reaction to Siena TV has been overwhelmingly positive. The students in my class laughed and cheered throughout the whole screening and were very disappointed when they realised that there wouldn't be another episode until next year".* Another teacher stated: *"I think it has done a great job of raising student awareness of the opportunities around the school and good for promotion of co-curricular activities and community service".* This was important to the girls who volunteered for the project as it provided "short-term wins" (Kotter, 2007: 9) and the motivation to continue and not join the ranks of those people who resist change.

The quantitative data from 251 students saw 217 participants rating the engagement of the episodes as either 'very high' or 'high'. It also allowed the Pastoral program to be refreshed and re-imagined by staff and students alike. Students also highlighted this in the qualitative surveys. One Year 9 student commented: *"Siena TV was a unique way to get information across and it was much more engaging than a newsletter".* The quantitative data confirmed this with 214 responses rating *Siena TV* successfully holding attention as either 'very high' or 'high'. A Year 10 student stated: *"I love how it was students telling us and not the teacher and how it was really funny and it caught my attention".*

The Pastoral program and *Siena TV* also show students that the College is genuinely interested in what they think and have to say. It proclaimed a sense of "authenticity" (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006: 227), showed that House Group teachers

were ready to be surprised by students' insights and capabilities, and that the staff are "not dismissive of their thinking" (Rudduck and Fielding, 2006: 227). This is important in raising the profile of students within the community in order for the long-term goal to increase student engagement and connectedness to school to be realised.

One staff member suggested: *"Episodes have been informative. They have been humorous without being silly or disrespectful. Does viewing the Siena TV episodes increase participation in that particular pastoral period as well as raise a sense of connectedness with other students in the House Group? I would say definitely yes."* This was important considering the culture of the Pastoral program had been one of a teacher-centred model with tight control over the learning process.

A Year 11 student commented: *"I believe achievements are the most important one because if a student puts effort into a lot of work/music/sport, then why not show how much they achieved on Siena TV".* One House Group teacher reinforced this by stating: *"I would say it raises awareness about the different activities available in the school and, by extension, may increase participation rates."*

One way to improve engagement would be to represent more year levels, as 77 out of a possible 251 students rated this 'very high' or 'high'. Furthermore, students would like to see the program shown twice a term to encourage further participation and engagement. This was highlighted by a Year 8 student: *"More random interviews from Home Rooms to get more people involved in a small way".* This feedback suggests that students were excited by the *Siena TV* concept and that it created classroom discussion. It also appeared to increase student interest and motivation and enable students to be more positive about the Pastoral program as a whole.

If the program is expanded to more students from more Year levels, then potentially students will continue to gain a sense of meaning and control from the Pastoral program, as well as a sense of belonging or bonding to the school itself (Holdsworth et al, 2003: 5). As one of the student leaders commented: *"I think us four have been lucky enough to feel like we have had some real control and*

made some real change on behalf of the other students. That feels good. But I hope it doesn't stop there. We want more students involved with Siena TV. But we also really want this to be the beginning of something bigger".

Conclusion:

Implications and Recommendations

For others who are working on similar projects in other schools, it is important to be mindful to provide students with a sense of ownership of and belonging to their environment. Schools must work with students, as young people provide an important insight into their schooling. Students are seldom invited into the structures, policies and programs of schools where they can create or even participate around student wellbeing or pastoral care issues.

Students, if given the opportunity, can undertake action research and can plan, evaluate, gather new insights and be innovative. Teachers need to be encouraged to move away from their old approaches and change the ways they think to improve behaviours, learning and action within a school. Students should be able to influence the educational agenda on issues that relate to them and their wellbeing.

Schools need to provide a culture based on a powerful partnership between staff and students driven by strong collegial relationships, mutual trust, and enquiry to engage and motivate students to drive school improvement. Dialogue with students should occur without fear or retaliation and should be based on issues that students see as important and credible. This partnership can offer young people the chance to voice their own opinion, challenge teaching assumptions, provide fresh perspectives and make decisions about issues that concern them.

School improvement needs to make a difference to students. The first step is to let students be part of that process.

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Students from secondary schools on the South Coast of NSW have started a statewide student leadership e-magazine for SRCs - totally run by students - called **Leaders of TMRW**. The first issue came out in Term 4, 2015 and the intention is to publish this once a term. For more details, contact them at leadersoftmrw@gmail.com



Communication: Our SRC Website

Communication is of paramount importance for **Student Representative Councils**. As such, early last year, we decided to leverage the technology that we have today to create a website made by students, for students. Not only does this connect the students at **The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School** to their school, but it also connects members of the public to the school.

In a world in which shared knowledge can achieve far greater feats than what each of us individually can, the website is a step forward in our intended collaboration with schools across Victoria. We learn so much by listening to people and our aim is to help each other feel and become empowered, gain the courage to initiate their own projects and be the movers and shakers in their schools.

On the left side of our website we have an introduction to our team. As a representative of the student body we wanted to be as transparent as possible and for prospective candidates to know what our roles entail.

The **Mac.Rob SRC** has many sections in which students can get involved: **Cabinet**, **Executive**, **Family** and **Student Action Team**. Applicants can directly learn about the roles and apply through our website. The **News** corner details the myriad of events the SRC organises and implements for the school as well as a calendar that keeps everyone up-to-date on what we are up to.

The **SRC Budget** page will be uploaded soon and will include what causes our money goes towards through pie charts; we also intend to create a line graph analysing the past three years of spending and how we can improve our account balance and allocation of money to maximise student wellbeing.

Lastly, the **Grants** page gives information about when and how people can apply for SRC Grants which are essentially scholarships of money that go towards paying for projects within the school community or to help financially disadvantaged students.

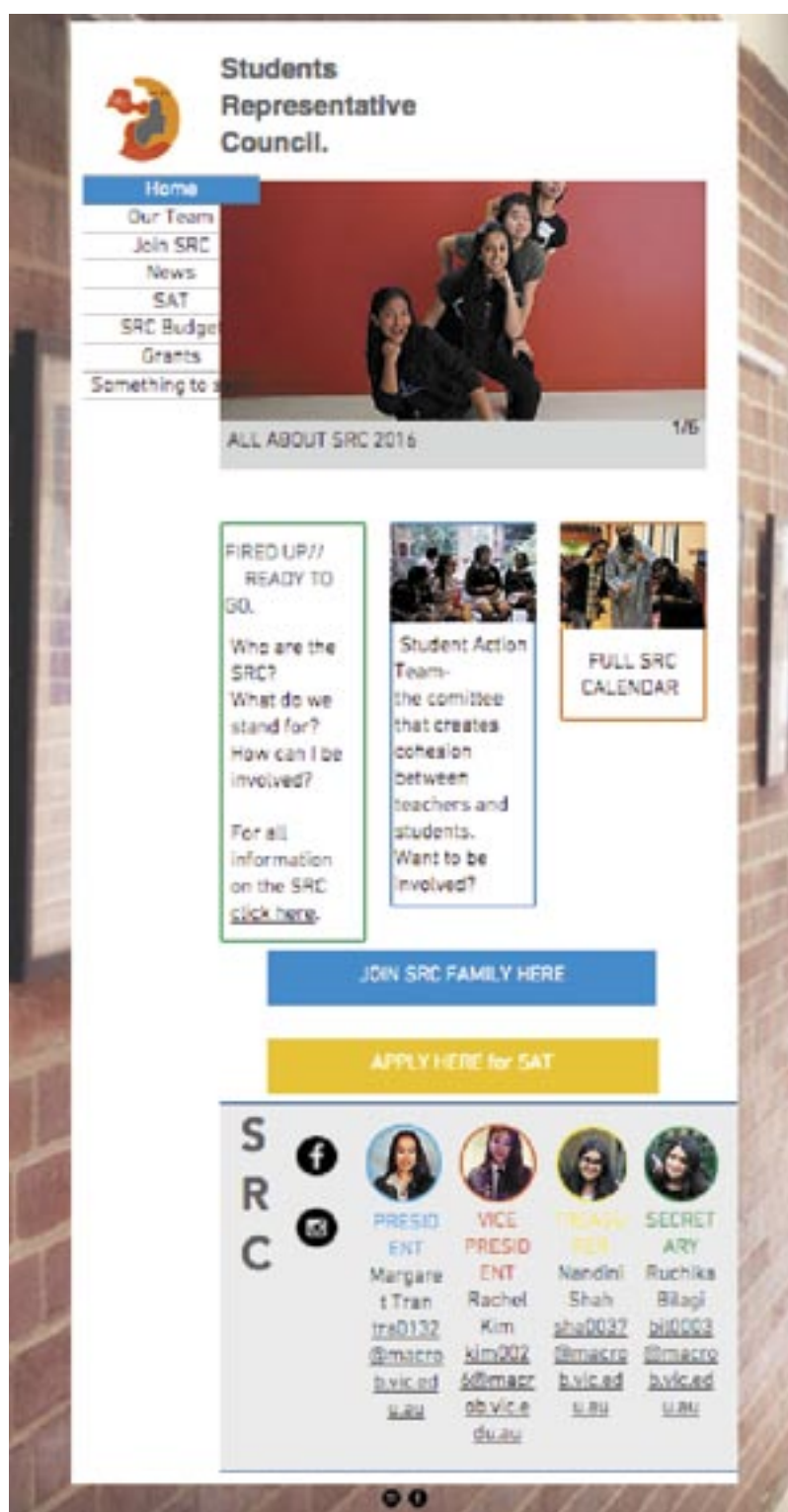
This website correlates with our values to be more transparent and increase engagement and involvement of the students at **Mac.Rob** as well as connecting our school to people across Victoria and the world. As a 140 people strong organisation we have a vision and dream to continue the powerful legacy of student voice that has played an integral role at our school and we are excited to see it grow as every day passes.

It has only been six days since we took up office but we are more exhilarated than ever to

make 2016 a year of not only student voice, but **student action, engagement and transparency**.

www.srcmacrob.com

The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School's SRC Cabinet



Social media and SRCs

Why should my team have a presence on social media?

Being visible

Your peers may already know you and what you do through posters, notices and announcements, but going on social media strengthens your presence. And because students generally go on social media after school, it will help make your team more noticeable and approachable.

Updating and Informing

Using social media as a publicity tool is an effective way of informing your peers about upcoming events or activities as they are likely to notice your post in their newsfeed.

Involving and Engaging

You can involve and engage your followers through social media by posting updates on your progress as their SRC. You could also make exclusive competitions or give your peers a platform to express their ideas and opinions. Sharing photos of events and student achievements also increases likes, comments and followers. This improves student engagement and connectedness to school.

How can my team start up a social media profile?

1. Plan

Firstly, identify which social media platform your team would like to jump on board – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc – then ask for permission from the relevant leading teacher/principal.

2. Execute

Join your preferred social media platform. It would be better if your team used an email account that every team member can access rather than an individual's email. Make sure your profile name is relevant to ensure that your peers know who you are.

3. Publish

Once you're done setting up your team's profile, publish it. Promote it at assemblies, through posters etc to gain as many followers as you can.

4. Improve and Maintain

Post regularly so that your peers are engaged but don't post too often that you're clogging up their newsfeed. Take note of what your followers 'like' to see what types of posts are working. Keep this in mind when trying to improve your reach.

Some examples...

Here are some of the things that some SRCs/student leadership teams do well with their social media profiles:

The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School SRC has shared posts of their SRC in action and photos of school events and activities that update followers on the things that occur within the school.

<https://www.facebook.com/src.macro>

https://www.instagram.com/src_macro



Elwood College SRC's Facebook page is similar to MacroB's in that it promotes their SRC. They have also promoted their events well, particularly through regular updates and hashtags.

<https://www.facebook.com/ElwoodCollegeSRC>



Bendigo South East College's Instagram profile is filled with photos of student achievements. Sharing student achievements on social media effectively attracts likes and comments.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/9aqqT7psMR/?taken-by=bendigosoutheastcollege>



Thornbury High School's posts range from photos of student activities to updates for the community. Their page targets not only those who are part of the school, but also their prospective students and parents, and their wider school community. The range of demographics helps promote their school.

<https://www.facebook.com/thornburyhigh>



#VicSRCvoices is a rolling series of articles driven by the stories and experiences of student representatives. It's about who we are, what we value, what drives us to act, and what fuels our passions to advocate for what we believe in.

Nowadays social media is used by various organisations in various different ways to engage with the community. Because nearly everyone is on social media, having a social media profile for your SRC team is very useful. **Chester Ngan** shares his big tips for big impact.

Teamwork makes the dream work

"Teamwork makes the dream work" – John C Maxwell

A team is a group of people working together towards a common goal.

As cliché as it may sound, there is no 'I' in team. There is less of 'me' and more of 'we'. As individual leaders, we all have different ideas and different opinions, and sometimes they are strong. But a lot of the time they aren't as strong and as innovative as what a team can come up with. Leaders need to build a team that can innovate – a team that exploits people's collective genius – to produce something truly original.

A group effort is stronger and much more effective than working individually because two heads are better than one.

Every individual is different and has unique skills, qualities and abilities. When each individual contributes to the team, different skills are applied and different ideas are put forward; thus, work efficiency increases and more effective solutions and plans are created.

Teamwork means going through a shared process of discovery – a process in which ideas are bounced off each other, improved on and cultivated by a group of people working together. Although in a team there may be team leaders, such as school captains, SRC

#VicSRCvoices is a rolling series of articles driven by the stories and experiences of student representatives. It's about who we are, what we value, what drives us to act, and what fuels our passions to advocate for what we believe in.

Resisting the temptation to talk too much can be half the battle when it comes to teamwork. 17 year old **Chester Ngan** shares how taking a step back and enabling others to contribute can create truly extraordinary outcomes.

presidents, school ambassadors, etc, 'working together' means that team leaders need to take a step back and allow others to contribute to truly create extraordinary outcomes. The purpose of a team leader is to work with their team to create plans or find solutions that work best collectively.

Together, everyone achieves more. That's why teamwork is important.

Leaders of TMRW Conference

For 15 years, Regional and State Conferences were held in NSW for student leaders to come together to learn the skills of leadership and to share ideas.

In Term 3, 2015, Educational Services held the first Wagga Wagga Organisational Directorate Conference for 100 students from Hay to Eden to Broken Hill to Wollongong. Participants wrote:

"This has been the best week of my life. I've never felt so accepted. Why can't school be like this?"

"This conference has changed my life, my perspective, my attitude; it has motivated me to be a better person."

"Thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity to expand my knowledge and help me meet new and wonderful people along the way. I'll be making big changes back at school, and implementing strategies and other ideas I've gotten from the SRC Conference."

All secondary schools, or schools with secondary enrolments, in this area, are now invited to send representatives (male and female) to the 2016

Conference to Raise the Student Voice. This will be a 5-day conference run by Student Representative Council leaders, from **May 16-20** at the **Warrambui Conference Centre**, north of Canberra (www.warrambui.com.au).

The conference will include presentations on mental health, domestic violence, sustainable living and leadership. Student-driven 'big ideas' will be developed to go back to schools to implement. A Student Voice planning tool, based on the school plan 5P will be unveiled. There will be future leadership opportunities as 2016-17 conference organisers and leaders.

For updates and more information, e-mail **Murray Walpole**: Murray.walpole@det.nsw.edu.au

All about Student Action Teams, including some hyper-linked mini-case studies, at:

www.asprinworld.com/student_action_teams



Connect on facebook

Connect has a presence on facebook. Find us at:



<http://ow.ly/L6UvW>

We've been posting some news and links there since June 2013, to complement and extend what you see in the on-line version of **Connect**. It would be great if you could go there and 'like' us, and also watch there for news of each **Connect's** availability on-line - for FREE.

Just a little bit representative?

Does your school have a process to find out if the members of the **Student Representative Council (SRC)** reflect the diversity of the student population at your school? What actions could be taken to help to address any identified imbalances?

Some schools have designated SRC roles representing various interest groups, and look for balance by allocating specific numbers of members to each year level, frequently relying on voting processes. However if the SRC's role is to be representative of the broader community, it is important to consider the many subtle factors that may act as barriers to some students' participation – such as popularity, self-confidence, social disadvantage, and level of engagement to school. And it is important to consider whether students who transition to the school at non-typical times have realistic opportunities to be included.

Advice from students who are new to the school

In 2015, Foundation House* conducted a pilot program at two Melbourne secondary schools, Ringwood Secondary College and Dandenong High School, which focused on the inclusion of students who were newly arrived at a secondary school.

A group of Year 10 students (some of whom were from refugee back-grounds) were supported to design actions and provide advice about social inclusion within the school environment. From their perspective, these **Student Advisors** identified over 40 main contexts of social inclusion or 'social spaces' at the school. Subsequently the **Student Advisors** prioritised this list and investigated five social spaces, providing advice

to the school about strengths and improvements to current practices.

The priority lists included topics such as work experience, communication, lunchtime activities, support for new students in the first days of transitioning and practical assistance with uniforms and resources. Interestingly at both schools 'hearing the voice of new students' was identified as important and resulted in some recommendations about encouraging diversity on the SRC.

The **Student Advisors** documented significant improvements that could be made to the SRC application processes, which inadvertently made it difficult for students who were new to the school, to apply for and become SRC members. Not knowing about the work of the SRC or the recruitment process was common for those who had not been at the school since Year 7. The recommendations included establishing a regular *audit* of the diversity on the SRC team compared with the general student population, reviewing the recruitment processes, and adding two new positions or portfolios to the SRC namely:

1. New Student Representative

Available for students who have been at the school for less than 18 months. This position can be held for one year only, after which the holder supports the incoming position holder.

I had a good chance of being a School Leader at my old school. No one knows me here so there's no chance. It's just one of those things I knew would happen when we had to move to Gran's after Mum died.

Secondary school student

2. CALD student Representative

A position for a student of **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)** background, to represent the interests of CALD students at the school. Many schools currently have such a position, and the **Student Advisors** strongly emphasised the value of this. This representative maintains regular connections with **English as an Additional Language (EAL)** students and specialist staff, promoting the work of the SRC.

Both SRC positions would require some modification to the usual recruitment processes. Similarly both roles would depend on long term support from teachers (possibly EAL staff), alongside a nominated buddy or mentor with experience as an SRC representative.

Students transfer to new schools for a host of reasons, and this means they have different perspectives, skills

* The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (Foundation House), 4 Gardiner St, Brunswick, Victoria 3015

Because of all the bad stuff that has happened to me, like being out of school when I was homeless, and then moving between four secondary schools in three years, I think that I have lots of good ideas for the SRC, if they wanted to hear them.

Secondary school student

and knowledge to share. Developing opportunities for this cohort, and all students, to take up student leadership opportunities within the wider community, the classroom and the school (particularly within the SRC) is one step, amidst many, that schools can take to become more inclusive places.

Katherine Cooney
Early Years Project Coordinator
cooneyk@foundationhouse.org.au

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (Foundation House) is a specialised service with a focus on working with refugee survivors of torture and trauma. Support and free resources for schools are available at:
www.foundationhouse.org.au

Student participation and leadership opportunities that respectfully recognise and celebrate difference and prior experiences at other schools are a valuable but largely untapped resource for SRCs.

Secondary school teacher

I put in the SRC application form to the teachers which was hard because my English is not so good. I did not even get an interview. All the questions were about what leadership roles I had already had in the school, and there was nowhere to tell them about all the important things that I had done in the refugee camp, such as running my own cooking business and looking after my little sisters after our parents were killed.

English as an Additional Language Student

Student Voice Podcast

Jean Courtney

Every other week the **Student Voice Podcast**, originating in Ontario, Canada, will feature a young person, like Patrick, Lauren, Nico or Caleb who will talk about issues and how they took action to address them. **Episode 1 features Patrick Twagirayezu**, who will inspire you to think more about the importance of prioritising the disengaged student.

The podcasts are archived here, so you can listen, share and make plans of your own.

The **Student Voice Podcast** series is now available to listeners on *iTunes*:

<https://itunes.apple.com/ca/podcast/student-voice-podcast/id1093109629?mt=2>

To listen to an audio podcast, mouse over the title and click **Play**. Open *iTunes* to download and subscribe to podcasts.

Contact me if you know some young people who might want to get involved: jean.courtney413@gmail.com

Episode 1: Prioritising the Disengaged with Patrick Twagirayezu

Customer Reviews

Student voice ROCKS! by LaurenEB

This is so amazing! Student voice is so critical, and the more it can be shared, the better! I cannot wait to see all of the other podcasts which I'm sure will be just as amazing.

Amazing Job - Truly Inspirational by oliver14

I really enjoyed listening to this podcast on the role of students in fostering the student voice in our school communities. Patrick gave some fantastic and straightforward recommendations on getting involved and pursuing your passions. His ideas reflect the reality of our education system and his down-to-earth manner provides a positive perspective for youth to model. Definitely a podcast that I will share with friends and listen to again in the future! Can't wait for the next edition of the **Student Voice Podcast**!

Empowering Students Is Crucial - I love this! by dany

Giving students a voice is crucial for their development! Thanks to podcast like this we can empower the future leaders of our world.



Prioritising the Disengaged

During the spring of my junior year of high school, I found myself standing face to face with Ontario's Minister of Education. Admittedly, I felt out of place. Only a year earlier, I spent most of my weekends washing dishes part time at a local banquet hall, attempting to save up money for university. Had anyone told me then that I'd be standing in a room surrounded by student leaders from across the province, let alone speaking to the Minister, I would have chuckled.

Nevertheless, a year later I was at my first meeting as a member of the fourth cohort of the **Minister's Student Advisory Council**, otherwise known as **MSAC**. Befittingly, this experience would be the crucible through which I came to form some fundamental views on the importance of student voice. We were 60 students, working to share their ideas on building a better educational system. We discussed everything from implementing financial literacy in the curriculum, to instituting 'peer to peer' programs that would help young high school students adjust to a new milieu. We were even able to benefit from student research grants that could be used to execute projects to help improve our schools. I met some of the best friends I would ever make, and truly felt that I was making a difference.

Customarily, the most difficult question we discussed was finding a way to engage students who were disengaged from their school environment. Solutions would start with the habitual mention of an eventual *Facebook* group that would change the dynamic between students and their school (weekly surveys, better access to student council and staff). Ensuing, the conversation turned to organising social events that would make the school a second home for students, to which they could truly be connected. We would also tackle the problem of bullying, finding ways to make sure that every student felt safe within the community that constituted our schools.

By the end of my senior year, I had served as a school president and student trustee. Through these roles, our team instituted

the strategies to try and engage more students to proactively utilise their voice. Be that as it may, we weren't able to engage everyone, which became obvious to me after three different conversations.

The first lesson came in the form of a conversation with a younger student a few days before graduation. We were waiting for the bus and having a discussion about what a long year it had been. He thanked me for the work our Student Council had done to fight bullying, but confided that he had been bullied all year and felt our anti-bullying campaign didn't really help him. I carefully questioned him, attempting to better understand what he meant. He felt people bothered him about what music he listened to, the clothes he wore and mostly his love of anime style cartoons. Furthermore he explained that this would usually take part in the form



Patrick Twagirayezu is now a student at the University of Ottawa studying Law and Political Science. He has been an active member of his community for many years. In education, he served as a member of MSAC Cohort 4, student trustee, and as President of the Francophone student trustees of Ontario. He is currently co-founder and president of *Capital Youth Initiative*, which aims to reduce youth poverty in the city of Ottawa.

of a big joke, and they weren't actually aware how uncomfortable it made him. He opted to spend his lunchtime in the secluded halls of our school with two close friends, hoping to avoid these other students. When I asked why he didn't approach me during our campaign he said: *"How could I? Some of the people helping with the anti-bullying campaign were the very guys that kept bothering me"*. The truth is that despite the anti-bullying efforts, individuals like this younger student will never feel entirely welcomed in their school. The pervasive nature of different types of bullying perpetuates a sense of 'othering' in its victims and disengages them from their school community.

During another conversation, a student told me that the only reason teachers were willing to listen to my ideas was because I was a class pet. He felt they didn't actually care about students, and were just there to collect a pay cheque. His remarks revealed an inherent cynicism within an alarming amount of students who view school staff as antagonists. When the feeling of exclusion is juxtaposed with a cynical view of the school system, some students tend to view school as a necessary evil and limit their experience with education to all that is mandatory. If they don't have to do it, they won't do it. From my observation, I often felt that it spurred the apparent antagonistic view that some students had of our education institution. How can you get engaged with a system that you feel is working against you?

Finally, a good friend of mine once asked me how I had the time to participate in so many extra-curricular activities, with the burden of work, volunteering (40 hours or more) and of course being a full time student. I replied "efficient time management". Though I had been working two part time jobs myself during my senior year, she explained that she was working 25 hours a week at two jobs in order to pay for school. It became rather obvious that student engagement could not justifiably be a priority for her. Evidently, another contributing factor to preventing students from being engaged was their socio-economic status. This last point is extremely important to me.

The genesis of my involvement came from an eye opening summer trip to my home country of Rwanda, which allowed me to understand how truly lucky I had been in life, and how important it was to give back in my own modest way. Though I usually worked every summer, personal family obligations led me to Rwanda, and I would later feel the financial burden of going almost a full summer without working. Some students simply can't afford volunteering trips abroad, to complete more than the required 40 hours minimum of volunteering to graduate, or even to attend club meetings on weeknights and conferences and forums on weekends.

During my senior year, I realised that I always ran into the same people when it came to student engagement activities. Regardless of whether it was at a local, provincial or national level, I either already knew a great number of the participants or found that we had a few friends in common. The practice of student engagement tends, at times misguidedly, to attract typical 'student representatives': people who feel motivated to participate in their educational communities, do well in school, who feel optimistic about the changes they can bring about, and who are lucky enough to have the time to focus on some, or all of these activities. By no means am I suggesting that all

student leaders are financially well off intellectuals, simply that they are in some cases luckier than other students who can't afford to take time away from work or their studies. The irony lies in that fact: **those who are placed to solve the problem of student disengagement are the very students who are most engaged.**

The question still looms, is there really a solution to engaging those students? These three conversations made me realise, albeit belatedly, that we have to re-examine the root causes of disengagement. The three students I spoke with would have, in my opinion, been better suited to try and solve these issues. They simply understood them in a way that I never really could, through personal experience.

In my opinion, **being a student voice practitioner must, now more than ever, be focused on identifying these students that are disengaged and finding a way to bring them to the discussion table.** Focusing on the archetypal student leader is certainly beneficial, but can have its restrictions. Though seemingly productive, it can perpetuate a homogeneous circle of ideas, which fail at attacking fundamental causes of student disengagement.

Today, students have more power to influence their educational environment than ever before. When speaking to a former teacher of my experience on MSAC, he quipped that he had been a teacher for 25 years and had never once found himself in the same room as the Minister of Education. His comment was an unheralded reminder of just how far we as students have come. In such moments, one can't help but think of Nelson Mandela, who once espoused: **"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world".**

Before truly changing the world through education, we have to be more inclusive and prioritise the disengaged.

Patrick Twagirayezu

Student Voice Practitioners

A community for youth and adults

<http://studentvoicepractitioners.com/>

The **Student Voice Practitioners** blog is a Canadian-based community of young people and adults who believe in the power of the student's voice and who have first-hand experience in initiating and implementing student voice projects or programs or in advising policy makers.

Launched in September 2015, posts have included:

- Who represents student voice?
- Empowering Students to be the Change;
- Student Voice=Student Choice;
- Students as Researchers as well as Patrick's challenge to readers to prioritise the disengaged.

Student Voice Podcasts are a new option. Episodes will be available bi-weekly. Subscribe to the **Student Voice Podcast** series and, bi-weekly, young people will talk about their issues, share their advice on policy, programs, curriculum and much more.

Have a **Student Voice Practitioner** story to share? Would you like to be interviewed for a podcast? Please join our growing community of contributing authors. Email: **FeedbackSVP@gmail.com** for more information.



Student voice, government, and representation in Ontario, Canada

In the early 1990s, Ontario's **Royal Commission of Learning** published a report titled *For the Love of Learning*, which recommended that "all [school] boards have at least one student member, entitled to vote on all board matters, subject to the usual conflict-of-interest and legal requirements."¹ By the late 1990s, student representatives existed in most of the district school boards in Ontario, and in the mid-2000s, the student representative role was changed to that of the **student trustee**.

Canadian government institutions directly impact on student learning experiences, and this article will outline the ways these institutions work, the processes around education policymaking, and the role of student representation at Ontario's district school boards—both locally and provincially.

Government structure

In Canada, each province is given responsibility for the government, regulation, and delivery of education for its school-aged children. Ontario's public education system comprises public primary (elementary) and secondary schools. There is no federal ministry or agency involved in the oversight,

formation, or analysis of education policy.

By right of the Constitution of Canada, separate schools are granted equal status in Ontario, and are also included when referring to the publicly funded education system. Most schooling is provided in English; however, several publicly funded French schools also exist in the province. As a result, Ontario's district school boards are divided between four school systems: 31 English public, 29 English Catholic, 4 French public, and 8 French Catholic.²

Municipal elections in Ontario occur every four years. Alongside electing their mayor and town councilors, citizens also

cast ballots to elect the trustees who will govern the school board for the school system of their choosing (again—English or French, public or Catholic).

Legal foundations — what is a trustee?

Education in Ontario is governed by the *Education Act*, along with the various federal, provincial, and international human rights codes and charters that provision student learning experiences. As elected public representatives, school board trustees advocate for public education on behalf of the communities in which they are elected. They are required by the *Act* to carry out their responsibilities in a manner that assists its school board in fulfilling its legal duties.

A trustee's role is to focus on student achievement and well-being, and participating in making decisions

- 1 Royal Commission of Learning, "For the Love of Learning" (Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1994)
- 2 Government of Ontario, "Education Facts, 2014-2015," accessed March 19, 2016, <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/educationFacts.html>





that benefit the entire district, while also representing the interests of their constituents. Additionally, they are required to communicate the decisions of the board back to the citizens who elected them.³

Trustees are also responsible for *"identifying the needs and priorities of their community and for ensuring these are considered in the decisions that result in practical educational opportunities for students."*⁴ Trustees are required to mediate between conflicting interests and values from within their communities, as well as from around the board table. Trustees must collaborate with the other members of the board by developing policies that work for *all* students—and ensuring that they are implemented effectively.

Only the entire board has the authority to take action or make decisions. The responsibility of the board is in placing all students first. The entire school board is required to uphold the implementation of any resolution after it is passed. Further, the Board of Trustees is accountable to the Ministry of Education (and, by default, the government of Ontario) for the proper conduct of their duties and powers. This includes the implementation of provincial policy and the use of funds provided by the provincial government—in most

cases, this number is in the hundreds of millions (or even billions) of dollars.

School board trustees are community leaders and have a responsibility to all of the families in their jurisdiction. Trustees work to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to reach their maximum potential. Trustees demonstrate their leadership in the following key areas:

*establishing vision to ensure a strong public education system; setting goals for student achievement; undertaking assessment to measure progress; promoting accountability throughout the school board; allocating resources in ways that ensure equity of opportunity and demonstrate accountability; establishing a respectful, caring, professional climate throughout the school board; creating collaborative relationships inside the board and across the community; promoting continuous improvement; [and by] promoting community involvement and establishing communications.*⁵

As one can see, it quickly becomes clear how much of a role trustees play in the promotion of positive education—and in the day-to-day lives of children.

Student trustees

Student trustees are positions on the board of trustees across all district school boards in the province. This position is mandated by the Ministry of Education. Student trustees work

alongside their municipally-elected counterparts to enact changes in policy and budget to further the education of students across their district and across the province. Given much of the same rights and responsibilities as the adult school trustees in terms of professional development activities, speaking rights during meetings, access to funding, and access to restricted information, student trustees play an active role in school boards' decision-making processes. Each school board is required to have between one and three student trustees, all of whom are granted a seat at the board table. Unlike municipally-elected trustees, student trustees are elected each year.

A person is qualified to act as a student trustee *"if he or she is enrolled in the senior division of a school of the board and is, (a) a full-time pupil; or (b) an exceptional pupil in a special education program for whom the board has reduced the length of the instructional program on each school day... so long as the pupil would be a full-time pupil if the program had not been reduced."*⁶ Elected by a democratic process determined by each school board, any grade 11 or 12 student in an Ontario public school is eligible to run for office, so long as they are a full-time student who is not serving a sentence of imprisonment.

There are only three areas in which student trustees are not granted rights equal to their municipally-elected counterparts. First, student trustees are not official members of the board, and thus are not granted binding votes on any matter before the board or any of its committees.⁷ This being said, student trustees are entitled to require that a matter before the board or one of its committees on which the student trustee sits be put to a recorded vote, and in that case there shall be *"(a) a recorded non-binding vote that includes the student trustee's vote; and (b) a recorded binding vote that does not include the student trustee's vote."*⁸

Student trustees are also not allowed to move motions, but they are entitled to suggest a motion⁹ on any matter at a meeting of the board or one of its committees. If no trustee at the board

3 Education that Connects, "What Do Trustees Do?," accessed March 19, 2016, <http://elections.ontarioschooltrustees.org/en/about-trustees/what-trustees-do.html>

4 *Ibid*

5 *Ibid*

6 *O. Reg. 7/07: Student Trustees*, 2007, s. 5 (2) (Ont.)

7 *Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2*, s. 55 (2) (Ont.)

8 *Ibid.*, s. 55 (3)

9 *Ibid.*, s. 55 (4)

table or committee moves the suggested motion, the record will still show the suggested motion.

Finally, student trustees are not entitled to be present at meetings that are closed to the public and involve “the disclosure of intimate, personal or financial information in respect of a member of the board or committee, an employee or prospective employee of the board or a pupil or his or her parent or guardian,”¹⁰ but are allowed at other closed meetings that deal with other sensitive matters, including the security of the property of the board, the acquisition or disposal of a school site, decisions in respect of negotiations with employees of the board, or litigation affecting the board.¹¹

Despite these limitations, student trustees are still able to exercise a great deal of agency at the board table—trustees will often solicit the opinion of student trustees prior to making big decisions, and will sometimes directly ask these questions at the board table to get them noted on the record, in meeting minutes, and onto the radars of citizens in the public sphere.

Most school boards in the province have bodies of student government that transcend school boundaries. **Student senates** are groups of student representatives from across the district school board who gather to discuss issues of student voice and representation with board representatives—their student trustees. Student trustees are, more often than not, tasked with chairing their school board’s student senates—or, alternatively, will hold a membership to the student organisation. Student senates generally include pupils from secondary schools across the board; however, across the province, they are expanding to include students as young as thirteen and fourteen years—these are students in primary school.

Student senates are conduits for student voice—they are cogs in the representation machine. Often, the model works like so: student senators will bring issues from their schools to senate meetings for discussion and information. Student trustees then relay that information through two main avenues: first, to the board (trustees, supervisory officials, and the director of education)



through reports, resolutions of the board, policy, and inquiries; and second, to organisations that have the power to lobby the provincial government to enact change. Any change enacted by the provincial government directly affects students—and so student voice comes full-circle.

But let’s go back one step for a bit.

Student stakeholder ship

The **Ontario Student Trustees’ Association**, and in French: *l’Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l’Ontario* (henceforth OSTA-AECO) is an organisation of student trustees in Ontario, and the largest student stakeholder group to the Ministry of Education. OSTA-AECO represents the two million students enrolled in Ontario’s public schools. The organisation’s mission is to promote “the unity without conformity of all affiliated Student Trustees in Ontario in order to exercise student consultation and representation.”¹²

OSTA-AECO’s long-form mission statement culminates with a proclamation to achieve “a student vision, a united voice.”¹³ They work to ensure that student trustees receive the support, orientation, and advocacy that they need in order to be successful student representatives who, in turn, empower and advocate for the students

of Ontario. The organisation works to form an education system that:

*guarantees students supportive and stimulating continual growth, development, and learning, both inside and outside the classroom; provides a system of safety and equity; creates a culture that values the worth and importance of the student voice; maintains qualified, knowledgeable, and engaging teachers; prepares students for civic understanding, with no student being the victim of political ends; embraces bilingualism and multiculturalism; and is world class for student success, providing relevant measures to address student needs and foster student ownership in education.*¹⁴

The organisation is divided into four distinct sectors: the executive council, the public and Catholic board councils, and the board of directors. With the exception of the board of directors, the entire organisation is run by student trustees. The executive council is chosen each year through a series of elections at OSTA-AECO’s annual general meeting, and includes a president, chief executive officer, chief financial officer, and six officers for the areas of communication, policy, professional development, operations, administration, and French-language relations. Also elected are cabinets of the board councils, each of whom has a respective president and vice-president, who also sit on the executive council. Voting power lies with

10 *Ibid.*, s. 207 (2)(b)

11 *Ibid.*, s. 207 (2)(a), (c-e)

12 OSTA-AECO, “Constitution,” May 2015, 2

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*



the senior executive council, consisting of the president of OSTA-AECO and the presidents and vice-presidents of the board councils. The organisation on the whole is governed by a board of directors. The directorate holds office for a two-year term.

OSTA-AECO's general assembly meets three times per academic year: first, at its fall general meeting (FGM); second, at the Board Council Conferences; and finally, at its annual general meeting (AGM). Each school board is entitled to one vote toward the ratification of any motions brought forth to the membership, irrespective of the number of students they represent or the number of student trustees at the board table.

Asking—and listening

Each year, OSTA-AECO partners with **People for Education**—a charitable research and policy organisation concerned with public education—to conduct the **Ontario Student, Parent, and Educator Survey** (OSPES) to raise issues regarding student education with people who have a vested interest in—and are most affected by—Ontario education. This anonymous survey, consisting of 10 questions, aims to gather public opinion on many social and curricular issues.

In 2011, questions covered topics including gay-straight alliances, Canadian civics and career studies curriculum, healthy food options in schools, social pressures to finish secondary school in the 'standard' amount of time (ie four years), student-teacher relationships,

cyber-bullying, sexual education, mental health, and fees for sports activities.¹⁵ This breadth of topics allows OSTA-AECO to bring several corroborated opinions on educational issues to the attention of the Ministry for consideration when developing policy and legislation.

One question: *"Do you think that a student wanting to establish a Gay Straight Alliance [sic] club in their school should be allowed to do so?"*, catalyzed the development and passing of Bill 13, the **Accepting Schools Act**, in 2012—which came in response to the survey results as well as a trend in Catholic schools to prohibiting the creation of gay-straight alliances. The legislation amends the **Education Act's** definition of bullying to include *"causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property"*,¹⁶ and as occurring *"in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as ... sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability or the receipt of special education."*¹⁷ The legislation also expands the definition

of 'bullying' to include cyber-bullying,¹⁸ and prohibits schools from preventing the name *'gay-straight alliance'* from being used.¹⁹

The **Ontario Student Voice Awards** are a series of awards that are presented by OSTA-AECO to deserving student leaders within Ontario. They are given to students who exhibit extraordinary commitment beyond just their school community. Ontario students can get involved by nominating their peers or someone in their school community who they feel shows their drive and commitment. Nominations can be made by students as well as educators who witness a student demonstrate actions that warrant recognition. The **Ontario Student Voice Awards** are given annually at OSTA-AECO's AGM. Nominations are reviewed by a panel of elected student trustees. From there, winners are chosen and invited to the AGM. When reviewing candidates, student trustees look at areas where involvement goes beyond the classroom. This includes community involvement, extracurricular activities, and other information the nominator provides to the selection committee that makes the candidate stand out. By connecting directly with the general student population, students feel that they are being represented, heard, and most importantly, listened to.

Beyond the board table

The **OSTA-AECO Alumni Network** is run by OSTA-AECO's board of directors, and facilitates opportunities for former student trustees to celebrate their place in OSTA-AECO's history—and the history of Ontario education—as well as to network with other alumni and support current cohorts of student trustees. The **Alumni Network** runs a mailing list, and coordinates social events and professional opportunities for current and future alumni.

Through the **Alumni Network**, the directorate draws on the strength of its own connections with alumni to provide resources for current student trustees as requested. By providing these networking opportunities for current and former student trustees, OSTA-AECO is able to continue to act as a professional support

15 OSTA-AECO et al., "2011 Student & Parent Survey Analysis & Results," October 21, 2011, 1

16 *An Act to Amend the Education Act with Respect to Bullying and Other Matters*, 2012, s. 1 (1)

17 *Ibid.*, s. 1 (1) (ii) (b); *Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, C. E.2*, 1990, s.1 (1)

18 *An Act to Amend the Education Act with Respect to Bullying and Other Matters*, 2012, s. 2; *Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, C. E.2*, 1990, s. 1 (1.0.0.2)

19 *An Act to Amend the Education Act with Respect to Bullying and Other Matters*, 2012, s. 12; *Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, C. E.2*, 1990, s. 303.1 (2)

network for student trustees pursuing new opportunities and endeavours.

The **Student Trustee Leadership Awards Gala** is an annual event held each May to celebrate the achievements of Ontario student trustees and student leaders, as well as to welcome student trustee to network with alumni. The gala includes a dinner, networking reception, and various keynote speakers. Each year at the gala, two \$1000 scholarships toward the pursuit of post-secondary education are awarded to student trustees who demonstrate exemplary leadership, innovation, cooperation, and perseverance.

Conclusion

The student perspective is something that is valued across Ontario's education system. Despite the time commitment and financial and infrastructural expenditure required to develop the policy to implement a system where students represent students within the municipal and provincial government structures, the benefits of having this representation have had an immense impact on the ways in which over two million students have experienced education, representation, agency, and politics.

The implementation of multiple pieces of legislation in response to the concerns raised by students breaks the stereotypes that position students as disenfranchised members in a system

that only serves to further the interests of policymakers and politicians. Students have their voices heard and experience real, tangible change. OSTA-AECO's work with the Ministry of Education creates a link between students in communities and the institutions that directly affect change.

Across Canada, ministries of education and student groups hoping to legislate an institutional voice look to Ontario as a model for this form of student representation. The **Student Voice Initiative**²⁰ works with student groups across the province to approach legislative representation in order to ensure that students' voices are being heard equally in their home provinces. British Columbia's Vancouver School Board has implemented a student trustee position at their board, but the rest of British Columbia—not to mention the rest of the country—has yet to follow Ontario's lead. It's the next best step.

20 Student Voice Initiative, "Activate. Build.," n.d., <http://studentvoicei.org/>

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Photo by Sophie Schneider, courtesy of OSTA-AECO



Gell House Council

Remembering an 11-18 comprehensive school in a small and fairly isolated rural town in Derbyshire, England in the 1970s

Different teachers have different priorities. Two of mine were, and still are, to enable young people to learn about democracy by doing it and to learn to be responsible by taking responsibility for something.

My dream when coming to Anthony Gell School in the mid 1970s, as head of Gell House, was to move towards a situation where the 180+ students would become a democratic learning community.

This would be a place where curricular and extra-curricular would meld into one overall learning experience, with all students involved in decision making, project creation, implementation and evaluation built around house classes and all age tutor groups. These projects would involve the wider community of Wirksworth wherever possible.

A House Council would be the vehicle for initiating and/or coordinating activities, which would control a house fund, with house assemblies becoming the forum for wider debate and decision making. The size of the house was perfect – just about the maximum for face to face discussions where everybody could know who everybody else was, yet big enough for a wide range of interests and enthusiasms to emerge. The 180 students could just about cram into the house social area for assemblies, so long as every window still held its precarious quota. 'Assembly' underwent something

of a conceptual shift from being a staff-led hymn and a prayer session plus notices to become a student-led forum for house debate and decision making.

The previous Head of House had also carried the enormous responsibility of a major department. I was in a much better position to innovate. The tutor team was mixed in age and experience and all the stronger for it.

The decision to create a House Council with representatives from each tutor group was unanimous. I discussed this with the whole house at several house assemblies. It was received with enthusiasm, with the amendment that if any individual who was not a representative had a good idea they should be free to attend a Council meeting to propose it.

The Gell Council of warm hearts

A scheme which evolved in 1974 to provide the Gell House at Wirksworth's Anthony Gell School with stereo equipment has mushroomed into an organisation which is now providing aid to many local groups outside the school and even overseas.

The extra-curricular activities of the Gell House Council have now reached such proportions that the council, which is run by the school pupils themselves with staff only supervising, is sponsoring the education of a schoolboy in the Bihar province of India.

From the humble beginnings, raising money to provide the stereo, the Gell House Council which has about 35 members now meets on a regular weekly basis.

For their own amusement and for the benefit of their school friends they run regular discos which raise funds for their optical bank account and a new venture is ice skating outings to Sheffield.

On the charitable side, free

film shows and teas are given at intervals for the elderly of the town.

A member of the council, Fiona Cooke said: "A film is shown to the OAP's before they have their tea. While the film is being shown sandwiches are made in the cookery room. After the tea, left over cakes are taken home by the elderly people."

Acknowledging the help of teachers, Fiona said: "We have now served over 350 individual teas."

Equipment

Aid has also been given to the Matlock Bath Playgroup and more recently to the Cromford Playgroup in the form of a number of pieces of equipment and visits from pupils who have helped with looking after the children.

The scheme to assist the education of a boy at school in India came after the council heard that the school was teaching children improved farming techniques.

Money has been sent to pay for the education of the boy, Chhabeeath Presad, and also to provide clothes for the other children.

Letters sent from the school are translated into Hindi by



contact in Oxford.

The Gell house's master Mr D Hannan told The Mercury: "The Gell council is run almost entirely by the pupils with only minimal staff

interference although its financial dealings have to be carefully audited.

"The council involves pupils of all ages in its work and gives the children a great

deal of practical experience in such things as arranging bank drafts in Indian roubles to send money to our Indian friends and in organising social events.

"I feel sure that, although all the work is undertaken voluntarily, the experience it gives students will prove invaluable to them."

Matlock Mercury (the local newspaper) for Saturday, 21st May, 1977



The first meeting was attended by the two representatives from each of the eight tutor groups who jammed themselves into the small house office. Some groups chose to elect 'deputy reps' and many of those turned up as well. I said that I would chair the first meeting only and that it might be a good idea to elect a chair for the next meeting and a secretary to record decisions from now on. Two great Year 10 characters were elected – who were much better known to the students than to me as a new arrival.

The first discussion was about how often to meet and how to raise some money. Some would have met twice a day but weekly received the majority vote. It was pointed out that other houses had sound systems but Gell did not. A volunteer deputation to Roy Pearce, the head, agreed to request an equivalent sum for Gell. Another group offered to research what could be bought for the sum requested. The secretary recorded all this in her new 'minute book' (provided by the English department) and put a notice of the minutes onto the then empty house notice board.

I had previously been advised that there was no point in putting anything on the house notice board as it would quickly be torn down. My experience at other schools had been that this would not happen if the notices were of real interest to students. I was wrong – at first. The minutes did get torn down. The secretary was very angry and said so at the next house assembly. She was a popular and respected figure, more so than I was probably, and was listened to. It did not happen again.

The deputation to the headteacher was successful. The sound system was bought by a group of students who listened carefully to several options in the local electrical shop and in shops in Derby. It was immediately put to use to run fund-raising discos at lunchtime. A treasurer was elected and a bank account opened.

Ideas for projects began to pour into the House Council. A Christmas party was planned for children from a local children's

home, which involved over 50 students. A film sub-committee of the House Council emerged, which used house funds to rent feature films which were shown at lunchtimes for 5p admission, the profits being used to pay for an evening showing for elderly people from the town's sheltered accommodation with accompanying sandwiches and cakes. Musicians from the house played during the tea and eventually a parent donated a piano for the house social area. More and more members of the house were getting involved with the actual initiating, planning and implementation of activities rather than just serving cups of tea, with the full support of the house tutors.

The house fund grew to several hundred pounds totally under the control of the council. Evening discos began – led by one of the first members of the House Council who had now left school. The Youth Tutor provided refreshments at wholesale prices and the snack bar group passed all profits to the house fund.

The caretaker and his assistant were incredibly supportive. They would walk round from the pub just in time to lock up after evening discos and, as far as I knew, did not claim overtime for doing so. Certainly the House Council was never charged for evening use of the premises. On one occasion a film about motor cycling was shown by the film committee of the House Council in conjunction with a local motor cycle club who had no projection facilities. The local community policeman, a parent who was also totally supportive, had some concern about the 50 or so Harley Davidsons parked at the bus stop!

A house hiking club was started by some energetic Year 7 students. Every Sunday morning, 40 or so students of mixed gender and age would set forth into the beautiful Peak District accompanied by a house tutor and usually a handful of parents. Maps of the proposed Sunday walk appeared on the house notice board the previous week and were never defaced, though

occasionally diversions were added to take in a tea room or pub that sold bacon sandwiches and soft drinks to teenagers. I never discovered whether this was strictly legal but it certainly was a local custom.

It was on one of these walks that the idea of a house insurance policy emerged. A girl had brought some of her own records to a lunchtime disco to supplement the house collection. Two records had been damaged and a house law was passed that provided reimbursement from house funds if personal property was damaged or stolen when brought to school for the benefit of others. It paid out perhaps two or three times a term but was a nice example of collective responsibility totally devised by the students. I don't think it was ever abused because young people are pretty astute judges of the integrity of other young people.

The Council decided to fund the education of a boy in a poor Indian village following the invitation of a speaker from Oxfam to a house assembly. This was managed by another sub-group. Yet another group began to organise evening ice-skating trips to Sheffield, which involved booking the coach and paying the invoice. Another group, with the help of the caretaker and some parents, converted one of the house cloakrooms into a magazine and games room. Magazines on trucks, sailing and wedding dresses were ordered by another sub group and a football machine was purchased – all proceeds to house fund. When some truck magazines were stolen, the culprits were identified, told to replace them and given a good 'talking to' by the House Council. It didn't happen again. Another group got fed up with the roses being trampled by hordes charging to the buses through Gell quad, so they re-routed the paths and, with house funds, bought 60 paving slabs via a deal with a parent who worked at Charcon in order to re-lay them.

The House Council rented one of the first video recorders to appear in the school for lunchtime film shows. I remember very well their negotiation with the Humanities department over the

appropriate contribution to house funds for the teachers to use the machine for lessons.

My dream for the creation of a seamless learning experience from the integration of curricular with extra-curricular was never realised but it is not a totally mad idea as I am currently discussing something similar in Finland and Poland (and Finland has the most successful school system in Europe!). We did achieve a lesser aim however: at several points through the four years, the involvement of every member of the house in some kind of decision-making process and the planning and implementation of some kind of student-initiated activity was achieved. The house notice board tripled in size and was permanently covered with notices about everything under the sun, with long lists of participants' names and nothing was torn down. Despite the wide range of other activities, the normal house activities of sports teams continued and supporter turn out was impressive.

The final achievement of the House Council before my departure was the massive logistical exercise of a house trip to the distant seaside at Blackpool. Although a core group did most of the planning, the whole house was involved in the decision making at house assemblies and everyone came. Nobody was lost and there were no casualties apart from the teacher who was sick on a roller coaster!

The project did not develop without criticism. A small group of more sophisticated students at one point felt and argued that the House Council was a sham democracy with no real power. In the name of punk rock and anarchy, they

campaigning to shut it down. This led to one or two seriously interesting House Council discussions where, although the rebels lost the vote, they nonetheless significantly developed their arguments – influenced by reading Illich's recently published *'Deschooling Society'* (One of the parents owned a bookshop).

Well, the House Council could not change the law of the land, or even the rules of the school, as there was no overall School Council at this time and none of the other three houses had a House Council. But it did make a lot happen that would not have happened otherwise and many people benefitted from its activities, both in the house and the wider community.

It also had a transformative effect on the relationships between the teachers who were house tutors and the students in the house, as both worked together on student-initiated projects where conventional classroom 'discipline' was irrelevant. It also got me reading Illich, which persuaded me that 'school' should become 'community learning centre'. After four years as head of house I became Vice-Principal and proceeded to try to do just that. But that is another story!

Derry Hannam

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Derry was one time head of house with some wonderful memories – and quite a few Facebook friends from 'those days.' He still has all the House Council minutes and accounts books, which are currently forming part of the source material for a book.

Lynall Hall Community School, Brunswick, Vic: 1976-1982

Whole School Meetings

Remembering democratic initiatives from 1970s

I remember how the whole school - approximately 70 students and 12-15 teachers - sat in a large circle for an hour every Wednesday morning and discussed, debated and decided on ways in which our school operated. For us these were, to borrow a phrase, the best of times, the worst of times: wisdom and foolishness, belief and incredulity!

Prompted by Derry Hannam's reminiscences of the **Gell House Council** in this issue of **Connect**, and prodded by Michael Fielding's paper on **'Whole School Meetings and the Development of Radical Democratic Community'** (Fielding, 2010) – and more generally by his commitment to remember our early radical practices – I thought I should make some notes about the **whole school meetings** we held at **Lynall Hall Community School** in Brunswick (Victoria, Australia) in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Despite the importance of these experiences to us, I don't think much has been written about those initiatives.

The school (**Lynall Hall Community School**) was an annexe in those early years to Brunswick Girls' High School (just as the whole school became coeducational and was re-named as Brunswick East High School). We were based in an old brick church hall, about a kilometre through inner-suburban streets from the 'main school', and part of a complex of educational units of various sizes. As well as the 'main school' of about 500 students, there was also a 'minischool' of about 30-40 students in old demountable classrooms, and the **Sydney Road Community School**, set up in 1972 as an annexe to nearby Moreland

High School, and now transferring to join this new multi-campus school.

Lynall Hall began in 1976, initially in some semi-converted apartments until the actual hall's conversion was completed. We then had a large open space, vaguely divided by old wooden cupboards, a stage, two small offices, a kitchen and, across a small patch of land, the conversion of an ancient lean-to into a tiny science room and an art room.

We aimed at around 70 students, drawn mainly from the local community, with staff (as part of the overall school's allocation) of between 7 and 20 people. (The autonomy of staffing and our capacity to interview and choose staff remained a vexed and contentious question for many years, and led to occasional conflict with the 'main school'.) But the Department's Staffing Office viewed us as a school for 'difficult

students' I think, and assured us that they understood that not anyone could teach there.

I could (and should) reflect on many aspects of that school, but here I want to concentrate on remembering our **whole school meetings**.

Right from the establishment of the school, we had a commitment to supporting the participation of students, alongside staff, in decision-making about the school's directions and operation. Initially, in those first weeks, I remember that we had whole school meetings every morning, where we discussed plans for the day's classes and activities. Gradually, these meetings settled into a pattern of a weekly one-hour meeting, held regularly (I suspect because of part-time staff availability) on a Wednesday morning. This became a strong tradition of the school for many years.

In the 1980 school **prospectus**, we wrote about how the school was operating at that time:

The school stresses the responsibility of all students who participate in the running of the school through regular whole-school meetings. These meetings are a forum for discussion and debate and can make decisions on school rules, money raising and spending, school actions, etc. It is a formal meeting, chaired in rotation by each home group. Whilst it is a slow process educating students to discuss issues, rather than always being told what to do, we have been pleased at student interest at mastering meeting techniques. We believe it is essential for students to achieve this in order to be able to exercise power over their lives and environment now and in the future.

The meetings are preceded by home-group meetings which are used for the communication of notices, discussion of issues, review of work done by students, preparation for the school meeting, decisions on matters affecting just the home group, etc.

Other meetings are held from time to time and students are encouraged to participate in all aspects of running the school. Late in 1979, a 'Disputes Committee' representing all home groups and teachers, was set up to hear and decide on disputes that could not be settled within home groups, and to recommend on the enrolment of students and the employment of teachers.

There is also a Business Meeting after school once a week, which deals

with the day-to-day running of the school and any action necessary from school meetings. Students are also welcome to participate in this meeting (except when other particular students are being discussed). It has been one of our disappointments that students have not taken enough advantage of this area of participation, and that these Business Meetings have been mainly staff meetings.

Lynall Hall Prospectus, 1980,
as published in **Connect 3** (April, 1980):
pp 33-34

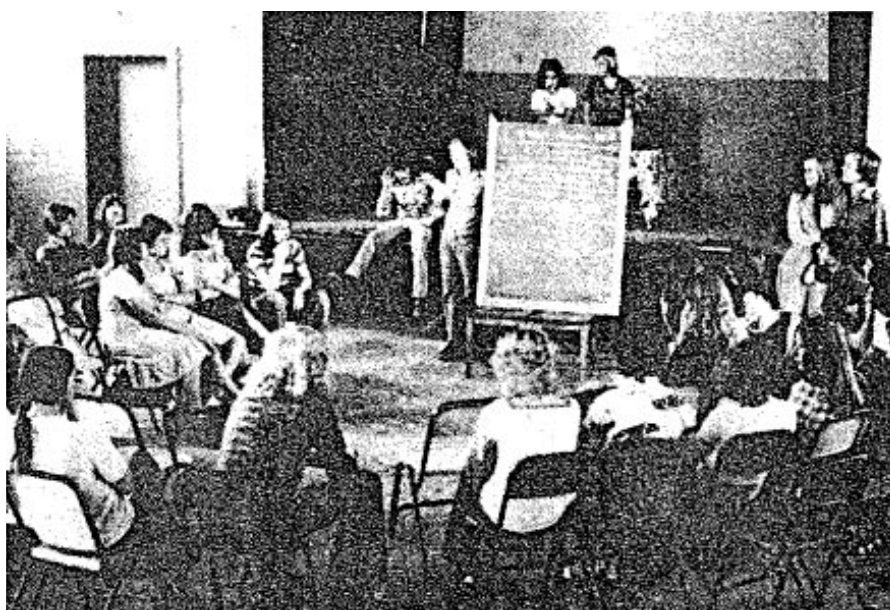
Unfortunately the minute books of these meetings have vanished over the years, and we lack direct records of the topics, debates and decisions, as recorded by both students and teachers. However, I remember wide-ranging issues being hotly debated. At one stage, we debated smoking policy almost every week – with decisions ranging from total bans to total acceptance (and these applied equally to students and staff) – and I'm now so relieved that this would not be possible!

At another time, one home group raised the issue of retrieving balls hit or kicked onto the roof of the hall. Who should be able to do that? One staff member sharply noted that his duty of care and legal liability meant that he must supervise any retrieval – students couldn't just climb up. There was silence for a moment, and then one of the younger (and angrier) students burst out: **"Then why the &#X*% are we even discussing this?"** A really good point – and we were all learning about realistic limits on 'democracy' as well as about its processes.

One year, a new student enrolled at the school in Year 12, after previous years at another community school. She was highly articulate and experienced in these forms of participation, and convinced the school that we shouldn't make decisions by voting, but by **consensus**. This was a substantially new idea for most students (and for many staff) and challenged the 'Vote ... vote ... yeah! - we won!' approach. So instead, we attempted to talk about issues, extending the discussion and suggesting alternative approaches until something was proposed on which we would all agree. At times, however, this became decision-making by exhaustion, as opponents would 'give up' rather than have extended ... and extended ... and extended meetings – often just before lunch. But they were fantastic discussions and, I still think, great learning experiences for us all.

We'd usually meet in the main hall – the largest space that could contain us all. At times, whole school meetings weren't compulsory (and at times they were), but there was strong pressure to be part of the school community through them. And at other times, these meetings responded to crises (eg an incident at an inter-school sporting match) by cramming everyone into a much smaller space, which amplified the sense of communal responsibility.

We argued about the extent to which the school was a 'community' school, especially as we accepted students from a wider geographical area. Initially students were just from Brunswick (not quite as sharply defined as another community school, which would only enrol students within two traffic lights of the school



Lynall Hall meeting; from Connect 3, April 1980

building), but we began succumbing to pressure to accept students from elsewhere. Partly this was because we were approached by students and their families who understood the school philosophy and wanted to be participants; partly this was because students who had been rejected by or who had themselves rejected other schools were referred to us (mainly willingly, but sometimes not); partly because there was always pressure at the start of a school year to keep up student numbers in order to maintain staffing.

Faced with that reality, we asked again: in what sense were we a community school? Doug White, lecturer at LaTrobe University, suggested that we (and others) formed a *'community of intent'* and that resonated well with us. And so the operation of the school became part of what Fielding later called *'Democracy as Shared Responsibility'* (2010).

What was the impact of this form of community - with its meetings, structures and shared responsibility?

It was an incredibly intense experience, exciting, (at times) angry, exasperating, (always) inspiring.

Recently, a student at the school at that time (around 1981) wrote about the impact on her life: she is now an Associate Professor at a University in Victoria. I think some extracts from her chapter in a book she recently co-edited summarise what we hope were outcomes for all students (see box).

I am proud of and honoured by these comments. They are echoed in other conversations with ex-students: *"the best school I ever attended"; "I wish my parents had let me stay"; "I'm now driving a bus in Broadmeadows and have two kids - and am proud of my life. That's the influence that Lynall Hall had."*

This is just one aspect of a complex small school, one of the early schools to offer an alternative Year 12 (STC) outside the then HSC system - and get students into University without competitive assessment and after negotiated learning experiences.

But those are other stories about student participation that should still be remembered and told.

Roger Holdsworth

Reference:

Fielding, M. (2010). Whole School Meetings and the Development of Radical Democratic Community. *Stud. Philos. Educ.* (on-line: 13 November 2010)

"From the moment I set foot in Lynall Hall, I felt at home. There was a tangible ethos of unconditional acceptance throughout the place. For the first time I found myself at a school where I did not feel an ongoing sense of personal shame – for my public housing background, my lack of cultural and academic sophistication, my financial circumstances, my 'otherness'. ... At Lynall Hall the talk was not about limitations, but of potential, and rather than fostering a sense of competitive elitism among students within an authoritarian teaching paradigm, the school was run on radically egalitarian principles that had everyone, staff and students alike, on first-name terms, with students given the freedom to come and go – and attend classes or not – as we pleased...

"The spectrum of 'marginalised' students as exemplified by Lynall Hall's student population ranged well beyond those with behavioural problems ... and those from straitened socio-economic backgrounds such as mine. The school accommodated between 60 and 70 students in those days, of whom a significant number were highly talented artists, budding theatrical performers (several went on to successful acting careers), musicians, poets, and so on. The common denominator was a radical incompatibility with mainstream education, whether due to a profound dissatisfaction with the conventional curriculum, an equally profound inability to conform to the discipline structure and social norms of schools wedded to that curriculum, or both.

"Lynall Hall's teaching staff numbered approximately a dozen. Unsurprisingly most of them had also found mainstream education fundamentally unsatisfactory – albeit for primarily pedagogical, rather than personal, reasons. Thus their outlook in many ways complemented that of the students, and their approach to the classroom in turn reflected a significant departure from the teaching norms of the day...

"... Lynall Hall ... provided the personal support and acceptance so badly needed by many marginalised students, and fostered an ambience of informal egalitarianism (so informal and egalitarian that the interview panel for staff positions consisted mainly of students, and we held the interviews at a local pizza restaurant); the 'progressivist' aspect gave every student the opportunity to become genuinely responsible for their own learning, firstly by making class attendance itself optional (which resulted in surprisingly little absenteeism), and then by extending to students the freedom to find their own creative path, guided and facilitated by the teachers. Thus during my time there (and in terms of the scope of opportunities I received, my experience was quite typical), I was able to take part in productions at two of Melbourne's leading 'fringe' theatres, appear regularly on community radio, engage in street theatre, and have adventures such as interviewing the lead singer of the local band *Men at Work*, who had just had several international hits.

"The more formal classwork included mathematics, art and English. Math classes were the only ones I found outright boring. The solution: I was gently advised to skip them and head off to do something I enjoyed instead — which usually meant hanging out in the art room. Apart from exploring our own creativity, at the urging of the art teachers we attended small, local exhibitions, and major ones at the National Gallery; thus I was exposed to a range of artists and their works one would have been unlikely to encounter in West Heidelberg...

"This eclectic mix of aesthetic, literary and cultural stimuli produced three main outcomes... Firstly, by the time I emerged from Lynall Hall I had acquired the basis of what I would later learn to call 'cultural capital' — an accumulated body of goods, ideas and world knowledge that over time is incorporated into the individual's habitus and can provide the dynamism for upward mobility ... Secondly, along with this transformation in my personal potential, my worldview had been significantly politicised — not because Lynall Hall's teachers taught with any particular political agenda, nor because the institution itself was a 'hotbed of radicalism' *per se*, but because my own background had inevitably readied me for an awakening, through increased knowledge, to the politics of class, socio-economic deprivation, gender, and injustice in my own life and the lives of others... I had not become a 'Marxist' in any doctrinaire sense, nor wedded to any other dogmatic ideology; this independence I probably owe to the third lasting effect of Lynall Hall on my development: a capacity for critical thinking — an understanding of the need for clear, constructive scepticism and thoughtful examination of issues and their attendant, defining questions. This enabled the synthesis of all I learned at Lynall Hall and beyond, and therefore stands as perhaps the most valuable outcome of all. As feminist scholar and educator bell hooks (2006) puts it, 'Thinking critically is at the heart of anybody transforming their life, and I really believe that a person who thinks critically, who may be extraordinarily disadvantaged materially, can find ways to transform their lives in ways that can be deeply and profoundly meaningful' (hooks, 2006)...

"... I did eventually finish secondary school, at the age of 25. There has never been a doubt in my mind that it was largely the intellectual grounding provided me by Lynall Hall that made it possible, and that further motivated and equipped me to begin a degree...

"Lynall Hall, as I experienced it, was doing something of profound importance that does not show up in the data; it epitomised the principle noted above that schools have — or should have — multiple purposes not only as places of instruction and quantifiable scholastic achievement, but also as venues of those 'cultural, social, political and relational aspects of education' of which Reid (2009) speaks."

Jacqueline Z. Wilson (2013). 'Educational Dissonance: Reconciling a Radical Upbringing and a Conformist Career' in Robyn Brandenburg & Jacqueline Z. Wilson (eds) *Pedagogies for the Future: Leading Quality Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*. Sense Publishers: Rotterdam. Extracts from pp 132-135 with permission of the author.



*VicSRC Executive members recently participated in two national student gatherings. Liz, Danai, Thomas and William were part of the Victorian contingent at the **National Constitutional Convention** in Canberra. Spencer and Marine took part in a **national co-design workshop** around **engaging young people in policy-making**. Here are some reflections on their experiences:*

National Constitutional Convention

Liz: "It was really interesting to meet all the other students from other states. They were all really passionate about having student voice in government. We gave out business cards to teachers and students and they said they would try to attend Congress or the Regional Conferences."

Danai: "Over the past few days I've been trying to pinpoint the highlight of my trip to Canberra, but today it became apparent to me that personally it wasn't about meeting important people or those who had the best ideas – the thing that really struck me the most is how capable we are as young people, living in a society that's forever evolving."

"Being able to meet so many young Australians from various states, who are all so like minded, reminds me that we should never fall short of the expectations that are given to us because of our age."

"So many people are afraid of the unknown and what they're capable of, because they feel underestimated and undermined. Too many people are not showing their potential because they're afraid of the judgement and approval from older people who inevitably have more 'experience'."

"We're a nation of game changers, a nation of dream chasers. What you want to become and achieve isn't and shouldn't be at the expense of the approval of another, but is and should be at the determination of ourselves. Challenging the stigma of young people is only the beginning of a movement."



Co-Design Workshop: Engaging Young People in Policy-Making

Spencer: "The workshop was valuable not only for the National Youth Engaged in Policy (YEP) Project, but for teachers, students and stakeholders alike. It gave a space to begin a conversation between young people and their education where they were equals and their voices treated as such. Stakeholders were given a real insight to the personal beliefs of real students and so started an ongoing conversation which they are still engaged in with students today, conversations that are leading in exciting directions and solidifying projects that may have been underway in SRCs all around Australia."

"The idea that young people can take part in policy change in a meaningful way is by no means a new idea, but projects like the YEP workshops are cutting edge in providing a platform for this advocacy to occur. While Victoria has the VicSRC, youth representatives from other states that attended, including WA and NSW, have no meaningful way to engage in governance and policy change and may have had no idea that such a possibility existed. If young people are not given an opportunity to interact with their education at the highest level, it is easy to see that it isn't really 'their' education."





Images from early VicSRC Regional Conferences, 2016: VicSRC, Piper Huynh

Locations, dates and RSVP

Term 2, 2016: *RSVP for Term 2 Regional Conferences closes on **Friday 15 April 2016***

Greater Geelong: (closed)

Tuesday 12 April, 2016

Northern Bay P-12 College, Hendy St Campus, Corio

Register: <http://ow.ly/XPjeb>

Gippsland: (sold out)

Thursday 14 April, 2016

Hosted by Kurnai College at Federation University, Churchill

Register: <http://ow.ly/XPjgk>

Loddon Mallee: (filling)

Monday 18 April, 2016

Bendigo South East College, Bendigo

Register: <http://ow.ly/XPjiK>

Outer East Metro: (sold out)

Wednesday 20 April, 2016

Wellington Secondary College, Mulgrave

Register: <http://ow.ly/XPjKE>

Metro Inner East: (filling)

Wednesday 27 April, 2016

Genazzano FCJ College, Kew

Register: <http://ow.ly/ZYD8g>

Metro West: (sold out)

Friday 29 April, 2016

Catholic Regional College Melton, Melton

Register: <http://ow.ly/XPjot>

Inner Melbourne: (filling fast)

Tuesday 3 May, 2016

The Arena at NAB Village, Docklands

Register: <http://ow.ly/XPjuh>

Hume: (filling)

Friday 6 May, 2016

Shepparton High School, Shepparton

Register: <http://ow.ly/ZYDa0>

VicSRC Regional Conferences 2016:

Students Transforming Education

12 Regional Conferences Continue: 8 Dates for Term 2

The **VicSRC Regional Conferences** enable over 1,000 students each year to work together on common issues, define what really matters to Victorian students, and drive positive change in their schools, communities and education system.

A series of one-day conferences ensures that students are consulted and heard on the issues that matter to their education, no matter their location. Creating spaces for students to meet, to express themselves and realise how much they have in common is very empowering for all involved.

"It is wonderful to see our students so fired up. Our SRC now has a mission and a direction."

*Sally, Casterton Secondary College
Attendee at the 2016 Horsham Regional Conference*

It's the start of Term 2: four dates in Term 1 into our Regional Conferences and already we are blown away by the voices of Victorian students and their drive to make a difference in their education system.

We're gearing up for a big Term 2, with conferences taking us to Geelong, Gippsland, Bendigo, Outer East, Inner East, Melbourne CBD and Shepparton.

Regional Conferences bring together students from all corners of Victoria to drive positive change in our schools, communities and education system.

The conferences aren't just all talk! It's your day to connect with other students. Spark ideas. Share solutions. And kick-start your year of action right here and now.

You'll leave today with strategies to get your projects off the ground. But the issues and solutions you share don't stop here. What you explore with your region has a direct impact on the hot topics at Congress 2016.

Our challenge is to go even further. What is your vision for your school and education? And what action can you take to make real, lasting change?

We have power to turn our ideas into action. **Register to join the roar of student voices!**

Register now!

www.vicsrc.org.au/initiatives/2016-regional-student-conferences/locations-dates-and-rsvp

Bookings for Term 2 Regional Conferences close on **Friday 15 April 2016**



**1,000 voices
calling for change.**



TEACH THE TEACHER

Teach the Teacher – 20 spaces now booking!

"It's about having a conversation. As opposed to teaching, we're exploring. We're opening up the field so that teachers and students can question together. This is *Teach the Teacher*."

Year 11 student

Putting student voice at the front and centre, the VicSRC's **Teach the Teacher** program gives students a greater say in the decisions that affect their learning and their lives at school.

Teach the Teacher exists to empower students and give them an opportunity to lead a discussion with their teachers in a safe, collaborative and facilitated way. Students and teachers will then work together to explore solutions to improve the learning and teaching environments.

The VicSRC is **now taking bookings** for Teach the Teacher 2016!

We have 20 spaces available for schools new to the program.

To get involved check our workshop dates at www.teachtheteacher.org.au then call our Project Officer on 03 9267 3714 or email projects@vicsrc.org.au to secure your spot.

Want to host **Teach the Teacher** at your school? Or we have nothing scheduled in your area?

We're also looking for host schools in each region. Get in touch now!





VicSRC Congress 2016:

Ormond College, The University of Melbourne: 6, 7, 8 July 2016

Bookings open soon: www.vicsrc.org.au

VicSRC Victorian Student Representative Council



2016 VicSRC Recognition Awards

Metropolitan Melbourne; Thursday 20 October 2016

Are you a VicSRC Member School? Membership discounts

Did you know that you can receive discounted event prices if you have a VicSRC Membership?

If you are not a member school and would like to take advantage of discounted ticket prices to the VicSRC Congress and Regional Conferences, simply select '*VicSRC Membership (Annual School Membership)*' at the start of your online registration. Or check about membership on-line at:

www.vicsrc.org.au/get-involved/school-membership

Need help? Unsure if you **are** a member? Contact **Fiona Campbell, VicSRC Events and Communications Officer** on **03 9267 3777** or **communications@vicsrc.org.au**



**To sign up to the VicSRC
online e-newsletter ... visit:**

www.vicsrc.org.au/joinin/maillinglist

VicSRC Victorian Student Representative Council

The **VicSRC** receives funding support from the **Victorian Department of Education and Training** and the **Catholic Education Office, Melbourne**. It is auspiced by and based at the **Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic)**. It can be reached there on **03 9267 3744** or, for the cost of a local call from outside Melbourne, on **1300 727 176**; or by email: **manager@vicsrc.org.au**

Up-skilling the SRC

It's term 2! Many Student Councils are fully up and running, some are still finding their feet and a few are just now getting started. Whatever the stage of your SRC, and whatever the time of the year, finding some time to offer genuine training for the group will alter your outcomes for the year. If a student is to be an effective representative, then training is essential or else we risk setting them up to fail.

Second Strike specialises in supporting and training Student Representative Councils. Operating for 16 years, we tailor-make our programs to suit your specific school, and take in to account your students and the stage you are at.

Small stuff

A training day that is held during school time tends to be the most common structure and has proven most effective in demonstrating that the school takes the role seriously. Some schools also fund the hire of an external venue. This addition is nice but not necessary for creating the feeling of value. The element that will really demonstrate the school's genuine valuing of the student council is – lunch! Provide a free and interesting lunch that the group eats together and you're really on a winner. (Left-overs could be sent to the staff-room with a little note: "A gift from the SRC". Win some points early on.)

Should you get an external trainer?

There are very likely teachers in your school quite capable of running a training day. Bonus, they're free! A lot of the material we use ourselves is familiar to teachers. The advantages of an external facilitator are:

1. A new face saying the same things can have greater impact;
2. An external person can often elicit conversation that students won't raise if led by a teacher of the school; and
3. The SRC Teacher Adviser can participate in the training/planning day as a member of the team, advancing the working bond between you both.

Big stuff

Students should be consulted on the content of the program. So - what are their views of the critical needs of the program?

Most commonly we find two vital needs expressed. First, the students want a program and a presenter that doesn't treat them like children, but as serious people. Secondly, we find students want time to create viable and real plans, not hypotheticals all day long – so action planning is very important.

Lastly, though it is never spoken out loud, we find that senior students in a leadership role such as President, Chairperson or Captain, don't want to be sidelined and treated as an ignorant recipient of knowledge. A good facilitator should incorporate students as leaders of the training day, not just participants. The office of 'President' should be respected by the trainer.

When in the year should you hold a training day?

A training session can be of great value at any time of the year, however, the focus of the session should alter to reflect the current status of the work. The beginning of the year is great for getting going; a mid-year training should be about refocusing energies and building momentum for a major event or serious issue; the end of year can be a time of review or it could be a chance to train the new SRC so they can hit the ground running on day 1, 2017.

How do you plan an effective SRC training day? **David Mould**, Director of **Second Strike**, explores some of the crucial aspects to consider when planning a training day for primary or secondary schools.

Biggest stuff

Motivational sessions: largely feel-good rubbish.

Inspirational or heartfelt stories need to be backed up with techniques and skills the students can use to create their own success. An SRC training session should be focused on the students' goals, not spent listening to someone else's achievements.

Whoever delivers your training program, make sure they have understood your school's unique situation so they do not simply give you a one-size-fits-all program. Talk to them about your needs and hopes and have them send you a draft to confirm they understand the outcomes you want and the style that is appropriate for your students.

Sample programs for training days are available for download from our website, www.second-strike.com. Our trainers are available to discuss and draft a plan for your SRC training day. We charge for our training days, but not for the consultation.

David Mould
info@second-strike.com



OBESSU Launches Revised Manual for School Students

The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions - OBESSU - has the matter of the creation of representative democratic school student structures really close to our hearts.

In 2006 we launched a **Manual for School Students** that was aimed at stimulating the creation of students unions all over Europe, and was a tool for the empowerment of each and every student who read it.

Ten years after, in 2016, we are launching the revised **Manual for School Students**. This came after a year of intense discussions and analysis of the current needs of students in schools. A Working Group worked hard to achieve a tool that could really lead a student's path in the journey of participation and democracy.

The **Manual**, written *by* and *for* school students, is a journey throughout the creation of a democratic school student organisation, imagined as a space trip in the "school student universe". Students will jump on a space rocket and travel through communication strategies, democratic decision-making, policy influencing and mobilisation processes, as well as through networking, economic sustainability and event organising. The four chapters are simple and easy-to-read, adapted to every student and accompanied by examples, powerful pictures and graphics, as well as by

online and printed annexes giving a very hands-on touch to the **Manual**.

What we ask you with this email is to support our campaign and donate on **KickStarter** to help us printing this **Manual**, which was created with global lenses so that it could be adaptable also to different contexts all over the world.

We hope you will find this project valuable and will contribute also by **sharing our ambitious project**.

Please find attached some pictures that show the table of content and some other pictures taken from the **Manual**.

We will love to hear from you for feedback, questions and - why not - congratulations!

Giuseppina Tucci
on Behalf Of OBESSU Board
giuseppina@obessu.org



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International Journal Of Student Voice



Original artwork by Darren McPhail & Sarah Dempsey
(National College of Art and Design, Dublin, Ireland)

The International Journal of Student Voice (IJSV) is a peer-reviewed, open access e-journal publishing on the ways in which students co-lead their schools and communities by collaborating with teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders to define problems and develop potential solutions and/or take the lead on making change in their schools and communities. IJSV, established in 2015 by the Pennsylvania State University, seeks submissions from teachers, students, researchers, administrators, and community stakeholders. In addition to traditional research-focused submissions, we welcome and *encourage* practitioner reflections and multi-media submissions.

You can access IJSV at: <https://ijsv.psu.edu/>

Dana Mitra, Editor

dana@psu.edu

Pennsylvania State University, USA

Associate Editors

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Katherine Cummings Mansfield, Virginia Commonwealth University

Paula Flynn, Trinity College University of Dublin

Valentina Grion, University of Padova, Italy

Kate Wall, Strathclyde University, England

Exclusion of students from Victorian schools

Sector forum from Youth Affairs Council of Victoria

Recently there has been a welcome push to strengthen the educational engagement of young Victorians who are facing disadvantage. However, not all disengagement from school is voluntary. Some young people are being forcibly 'disengaged' from school due to suspension, expulsion or other types of exclusion.

The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) is undertaking research to gauge the frequency of school exclusions, determine which students are most vulnerable to being excluded, and consider whether the policies to protect students' educational engagement are working in practice. Our work will inform new advocacy to the Victorian Government.

We are keen to hear from stakeholders in the youth and education sectors about your experiences of supporting young people at risk of exclusion from school, and any successful approaches you have identified which help to prevent exclusion and maintain educational engagement.

Forum Details:

- Tuesday 24 May 2016;
12.30 – 4.30pm
- Queen Victoria Women's Centre, 210 Lonsdale St, Melbourne CBD

Regional forums are also being planned for Warrnambool and Swan Hill – details TBA

For further information, please contact **Dr Jessie Mitchell**, YACVic Policy Manager: policy@yacvic.org.au

Inclusive Youth Participation: How to involve more young people

Youth Participation Practice Network meeting

Come along to the YACVic Youth Participation Practice Network to hear about innovative projects that are including young people who can typically be overlooked for youth participation roles, and a discussion around inclusive youth participation.

When: 12 May,
9.30am–12.30pm

Where: Queen Victoria Women's Centre

Registration details available soon!

Mel Jeffery

YACVic Participation & Development Coordinator
pdcc@yacvic.org.au

Youth Action and ARACY National Youth Survey

Youth Action (NSW) and ARACY have launched a national survey for young people to tell Australia's political leaders the issues that should be addressed in the upcoming Federal Election.

If you're 12-25, take the 10-minute survey at the link below and you will go in the running to **win** prizes including Beats by Dre Headphones and \$100 gift cards!

More information at:
www.youthaction.org.au

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YPelectionsurvey3>



The People They Make Us Welcome:

A sense of belonging for newly arrived young people

For young people, positive settlement in Australia is inextricably connected to a sense of belonging. The Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) has released this paper to explore what hinders and what helps newly arrived young people feel like they belong in Australia.

<http://cmy.net.au/publications/people-they-make-us-welcome>

NEW SOUTH WALES - PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

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STUDENT LEADERSHIP?**

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ANYTHING ELSE STUDENT-DRIVEN,
AND YOU MIGHT BE PUBLISHED IN**

LEADERS OF TMRW!

**THE NEW SRC E-MAGAZINE
• FOR NSW HIGH SCHOOLS •**

Our Time

I want to share a project we are working on as part of our **Communicating School Redesign** youth-adult team statewide efforts (in Vermont, USA).

Twelve students from six different schools joined together to write and produce a song titled ***Our Time*** in order to message educational change in Vermont. This is a trailer that describes what we are undertaking.

When the music video is completed (involving many more schools), we will also make a companion piece with the students talking about what the lyrics mean and how they relate to Vermont moving toward student-centred learning. The process itself has been remarkable - embodying the best of a youth-adult partnership in learning!

Helen Beattie
UP for Learning, Vermont, USA
helen@upforlearning.com

See: <https://vimeo.com/160263962>



Save the Date:

Student Voice Seminar 2016

The follow-on international Student Voice conference/seminar has been announced for July 2016 in Vermont, USA.

It is a collaborative effort between **Pennsylvania State University**, the **University of Vermont** and **UP for Learning**. The dates are **July 6-8** and the title is: **International Seminar: Amplifying Student Voice and Partnership**.

This will continue to be a small, basically invitational event. For more information as it becomes available, and for early expressions of interest to attend, contact **Helen Beattie**, UP for Learning: hnbeattie@gmail.com



Student Voice Research and Practice facebook group

www.facebook.com/groups/studentvoicepage/

This open facebook group was initially established by Professor Dana Mitra, and is now supported by the work of academics, practitioners and students throughout the world. It provides a valuable community of people working and interested in the area of 'Student Voice' - in Australia, USA, UK, Italy and elsewhere – as well as access to useful resources and examples, and up-to-date information about initiatives. You can easily log on and join the group at the above address.



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... copies	<i>Students and Work</i> (maximum of 10 copies per order)	\$ 6	\$ 5*	\$
... copies	<i>SRC Pamphlets Set</i> (2 sets available) \$	\$ 6	\$ 5*	\$

(\$ check availability before ordering; * discounted rate for subscribers to **Connect**)

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Local and International Publications Received

Connect receives many publications directly or indirectly relevant to youth and student participation. We can't lend or sell these, but if you want to look at or use them, contact us and we'll work something out.

Australian:

Leaders of TMRW (NSW Student Representative Councils - Wagga Wagga Region; C/o Smith's Hill HS, NSW) Edition 1; Term 4, 2015

Parents' Voice (Parents Victoria, Wandong, Vic) Vol 43 Newsletter 1, 2016

VicSRC Regional Conferences 2016: Students transforming education (VicSRC, Melbourne, Vic) *Conferences Handbook*

Young people and the Learning Partnerships program (Helen Cahill and Julia Coffey) *Youth Studies Australia* Vol 32 No 4; 2013

International:

Participation for Learning (Professor Eva Alerby and Associate Professor Ulrika Bergmark, Luleå University of Technology, Sweden; Swedish National Agency for Education) Research overview; April, 2016

Rethinking Schools (Milwaukee, WI, USA) Vol 30 No 3; Spring 2016

ASPRINworld: the *Connect* website!

www.asprinworld.com/connect

Connect has a website at *ASPRINworld*. The *Connect* section of the website is slowly growing, with information about subscribing, index of recent back issue contents (hyperlinked to PDFs) and summaries of and order information for *Student Councils and Beyond*, *Student Action Teams*, *Reaching High* and *Switched On to Learning*.

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We've almost run out of print copies of the first *Connect* publication: *Student Councils and Beyond* (from 2005). And many of the ideas have subsequently been reflected in the *Represent!* kit from the VicSRC (www.vicsrc.org.au/resources/represent).

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Issue 41
Autumn 2006
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David Bridges and Robert K. Marzano

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